

# CULTIVATING BLACK FLOURISHING

**The Presidential Implementation  
Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism**  
Three-Year Milestone Report and Beyond



**Toronto  
Metropolitan  
University**

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**“If our roots have been strong enough to withstand harsh and sometimes uninhabitable conditions, imagine the growth that might emerge when equipped with fertile soil, intentional care and the right tools.”**

— **Grace-Camille Munroe**

Interim Director of the Black Scholarship Institute and former Program Manager of the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism



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ABOVE: President Mohamed Lachemi and Dean of the Faculty of Community Services, Kiaras Gharabaghi, welcome the university's inaugural cohort of the Black postdoctoral fellowship (2023).

# Letter from President Mohamed Lachemi

A commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, including the dismantling of systemic and anti-Black racism and creating an environment where Black students, faculty and staff can flourish, has long been a core value of Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU).

As an institution, we have been intentional about living this commitment in many ways: by prioritizing the hiring and retention of Black faculty and staff, creating opportunities to engage in cross-cultural learning and dialogue and in centring the experiences of Black people in our community. TMU's Viola Desmond Awards, for example, which celebrate phenomenal Black women connected to the university, began fifteen years ago.

Despite this, Black students, faculty and staff have shared that many gaps have continued to persist. In response, the university launched the Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review in 2019. The review resulted in the formalization of a detailed call to action and the creation of the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism (PICCABR), which together have led to significant steps to address racial disparity across the university.

From reimagining the performance development process to centre equity, diversity and inclusion and strengthening the pipeline of qualified Black faculty, to cultivating more intentional spaces of belonging for Black students, the PICCABR, alongside stakeholders from across campus, has been dedicated to bolstering the conditions for Black flourishing at TMU. These efforts coincide with the changing of the university's name as well as the signing of [the Scarborough Charter](#), marking a significant new chapter for the university that prioritizes our commitment to equity and inclusive excellence in everything we do.

While we have been doing this work for a significant period of time, the actions and goals formalized through the PICCABR's work have propelled us forward, resulting in significant gains. It is my pleasure to introduce this report on our progress as a demonstration of our commitment to dismantle systemic anti-Black racism and create an environment where Black students, faculty and staff can flourish. While much of this early work can be seen and experienced by our community members, the

growing and collective impact of these efforts is significant, laying the groundwork for more equitable practice to become deeply embedded in our systems, operations, decision making and how we show up in relationship with one another. This report marks how far we have come, but equally importantly, it provides a roadmap for sustaining these efforts and for the important work still to come.

Meaningful change requires commitment, bold leadership, institutional investment and collective effort. We each have an important role to play in confronting anti-Black racism. Remaining steadfast in our commitment is a responsibility we must uphold for our students, faculty, staff and alumni — now and in the future.

As you read through this report, I encourage you to reflect, initiate conversations with fellow community members and join us in cultivating Black flourishing at TMU.

It is my hope that together we can continue to forge a university community where all members can belong and explore the possibilities of all that they can be.

Sincerely,



**Mohamed Lachemi**

President and Vice-Chancellor, Toronto Metropolitan University





ABOVE: High school students from Toronto District School Board's Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement at the Black Scholarship Institute launch (2023).

# What you water will grow



ABOVE: Grace-Camille Munroe (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2022).

As a young girl growing up in rural Jamaica, I often watched my grandmother tend to her farm. She would spend hours patiently preparing the soil, pulling out weeds, mulching, pruning, and watering. She worked with intention and purpose. When I asked why she took so much care to tend the soil, she would simply look at me and say, “What you water will grow.” And it did. My grandmother’s crops flourished throughout the years, creating an abundance she always shared so that others in the community would never go hungry.

I often find myself thinking back to my grandmother’s farm. More specifically, I believe that the conditions that once allowed my grandmother’s sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and callaloo to thrive underline the same principles of care and nourishment needed for Black folk to flourish.

**Black flourishing seeks to cultivate the conditions whereby more Black people can thrive and be excellent without first enduring or being defined by racial trauma. Here, anti-Black racism can be understood as a contaminant to the soil that must be uprooted, not a characteristic of the crop.**

We don’t want to address the effects of anti-Black racism at the university solely; we aspire towards a vision of Black flourishing that is normalized, inclusive of and responsive to the diverse and unique needs of the Black/African Canadian community.

What you water will grow. If our roots have been strong enough to withstand harsh and sometimes uninhabitable conditions, imagine the growth that might emerge when equipped with fertile soil, intentional care and the right tools. I believe that Black flourishing symbolizes nourishment and sustenance for the spirit and soul of Black folk. When Black flourishing is achieved institutionally, there is shared abundance through which others across the university community can thrive and prosper.

*grace-camille Munroe*

**Grace-Camille Munroe**

Interim Director of the Black Scholarship Institute  
and former Program Manager of the Presidential Implementation  
Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism



# Introduction

Black flourishing offers a multifaceted framework that recognizes the nuances, complexities and intersections of Black experiences. It applies a holistic approach to centring Black well-being, acknowledging factors such as joy, rest, connection and community care. It establishes an environment where Black community members go beyond surviving and instead thrive, grow and unlock their possibilities.



In July 2020, the Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion (OVPECI) published the university's [Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review Report](#) (Climate Review). The report highlighted Black student, staff and faculty experiences of anti-Black racism on campus and put forth a series of 14 recommendations for tangible next steps to create a safer and more intentionally inclusive campus of belonging.

Following the launch of the Climate Review, President Lachemi established the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism (PICCABR). The PICCABR was composed of nearly 50 dedicated individuals across the university, with leadership from Human Resources, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS), the Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Affairs (OVVFA) and the Office of the Vice-President, Administration and Operations (OVPAO). Together, they formed the Student, Staff and Faculty Working Groups, and, with the support of the project team, these working groups were responsible for engaging with the university community to ensure meaningful action on each recommendation.

A Black Student Advisory Committee (BSAC) was created, composed of dedicated students representing various student groups, faculties and departments. In November 2021, the BSAC published the [Review of Recommendations Report](#), which was developed through 12 community consultations and a survey of experiences of anti-Black racism among 378 Black students from the university. The report offered tangible Black student-led insights that ultimately guided approaches to addressing all 14 recommendations.

During the implementation of and discourse about the PICCABR's work, a new theme emerged: Black flourishing. Black flourishing offers a multifaceted framework that recognizes the nuances, complexities and intersections of Black experiences. It applies a holistic approach to centring Black well-being, acknowledging factors such as joy, rest, connection and community care. It establishes an environment where Black community members go beyond surviving and instead thrive, grow and unlock their possibilities.

In late 2022, the university cemented its commitment to Black flourishing when President Mohamed Lachemi signed the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education. The Charter mobilizes Canadian higher education institutions around a commitment to address the realities of anti-Black racism on campus through four core pillars: Black flourishing, inclusive excellence, mutuality and accountability.

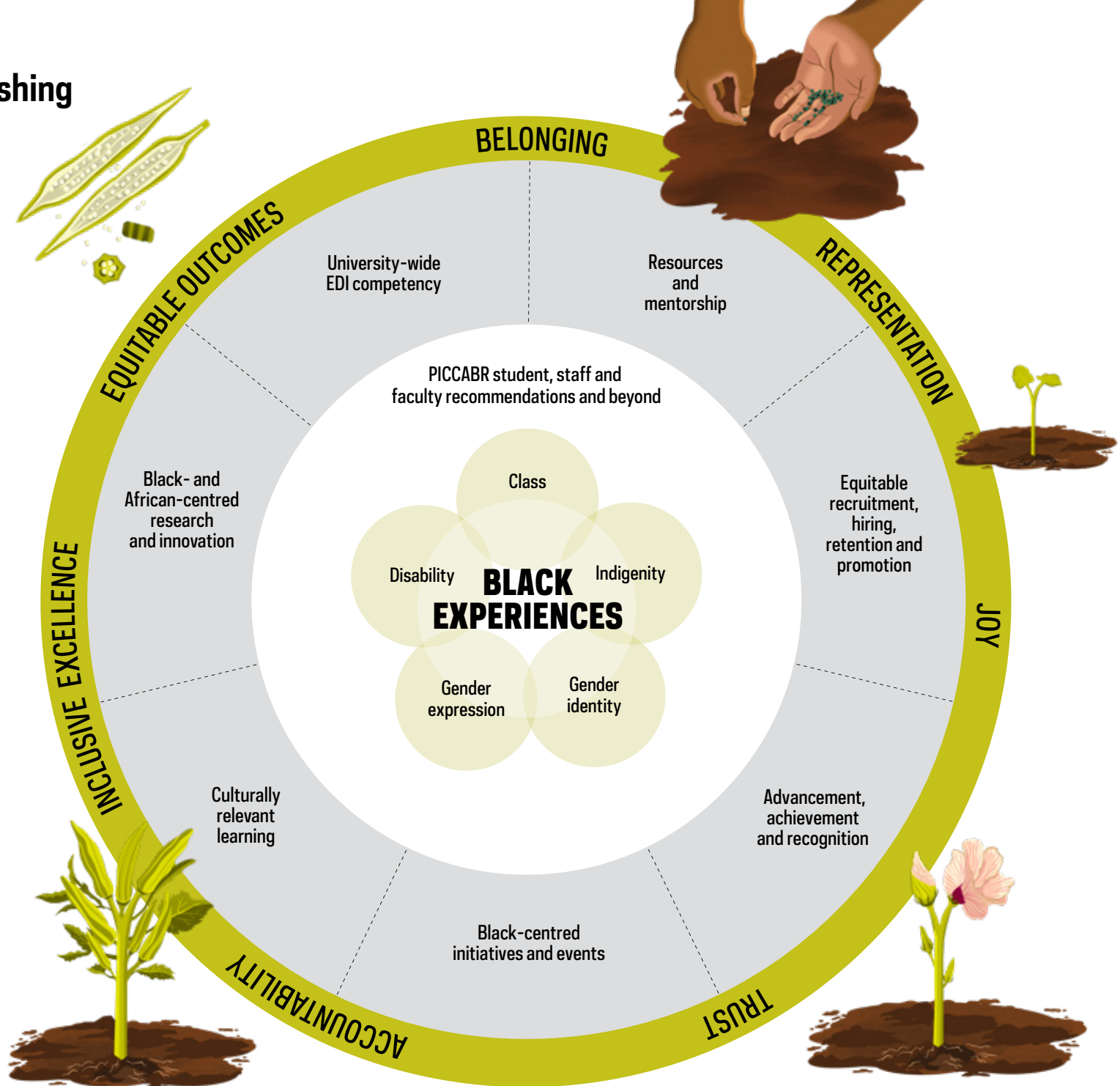


# Cultivating Black flourishing

TMU's Black flourishing model (right) displays the underlying principles and approach that inform the institution's efforts to cultivate Black flourishing at a systemic level. The concentric circle is composed of four rings:

- The inner ring centres Black experiences across intersections, including gender identity, gender expression, indigeneity, disability, and class, which drive the process of cultivating Black flourishing at TMU.
- The second ring reflects the activity level of the process which serves to implement PICCABR student, staff and faculty recommendations and other initiatives.
- The third ring represents key process outputs, including resources and mentorship, equitable recruitment, Black-centred initiatives and events, culturally relevant learning and Black- and African-centred research.
- The outermost ring represents the desired outcomes of the process, such as belonging, representation, joy, trust, accountability, inclusive excellence and equitable outcomes.

Outside of the model, an okra plant is depicted in its five different growth stages, from "seeds" to "harvest."





ABOVE: Black students and staff looking at plants in TMU's urban farm (2022).

Guided by this model, the PICCABR has been working to uproot various existing university processes, policies and practices that challenged Black flourishing and intentionally cultivate the environment and conditions needed for Black students, faculty and staff to flourish within the institution and beyond.

**Over the past three years, the PICCABR has held numerous consultations and events, engaging thousands of stakeholders and making significant progress on implementing all 14 recommendations to advance the university's commitment to confront anti-Black racism and cultivate sustainable Black flourishing.**

In January 2023, the PICCABR finalized action plans to guide the full implementation of student, staff and faculty recommendations, fulfilling its original mandate. However, the work is far from over. The future of this work has shifted from a project-based model to an institutionalized model, inviting aligned departments across the university to uptake recommendations. Under this change, the three executive co-chairs will support department heads and jointly make strategic decisions about PICCABR's work. The OVPECI will support the coordination and management of PICCABR, which will be decentralized to the divisions and departments, continuing to provide oversight on implementing each recommendation.

Decentralizing how the Climate Review recommendations are implemented aims to ensure that commitments and initiatives extend beyond any one project and become embedded in the daily operations, strategic vision and, ultimately, the institution's fabric.

To date, the PICCABR has actively involved hundreds of stakeholders, comprising individual students, faculty, and staff, alongside various university departments and teams. This intentional effort aims to effectively implement the recommendations outlined in the Climate Review. At the same time, many additional initiatives to confront anti-Black racism have organically emerged to respond to perceived inequalities in an ever-evolving social climate. While some of these initiatives are recent, others predate the Climate Review, demonstrating TMU's longstanding commitment to dismantling systemic inequality. For this report, activities to confront anti-Black racism that fall outside the scope of the Climate Review will be referred to as *essential nutrients*, symbolizing the diverse range of initiatives organically planted by teams across all corners of the university to cultivate fertile conditions for Black flourishing.

To weave together the story of the collective and forthcoming impact of these action plans and commemorate the Climate Review's third anniversary, the PICCABR presents *Cultivating Black Flourishing: The PICCABR Three-Year Milestone Report and Beyond*.

This report was compiled in consultation with Student, Faculty and Staff Working Groups and the Black Student Advisory Committee, who have remained steadfast in leading the implementation of the 14 recommendations. It offers a written narrative of their internal action plans. It draws from stories and updates shared since PICCABR's formation, offering both a platform to reflect on the university's progress in confronting anti-Black racism as well as an opportunity to chart the road to Black flourishing ahead.

#### ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

Throughout this report, sections marked as *essential nutrients* will refer to supplementary initiatives that have emerged outside of the direction of the PICCABR to cultivate the conditions for Black flourishing. While there may be some overlap, these essential nutrients have been organically planted by various students, faculty and staff groups across the university.



**“I would love to see TMU become the hub of Black scholarship and anti-Black racism knowledge production that supports community development, service and student development.”**

– Akua Benjamin, Professor Emeritus and former Director of TMU’s School of Social Work

BELOW: Akua Benjamin at the Alan Shepard Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Awards (2023).



## ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

### THE AKUA BENJAMIN LEGACY PROJECT

Akua Benjamin, Professor Emeritus and former Director of TMU’s School of Social Work, is a well-respected scholar and prominent activist with a remarkable record spanning four decades. Her advocacy has significantly impacted the fight against anti-Black racism, as well as addressing issues of sexism and supporting various social justice movements within the Toronto community.

In 2016, former university President Sheldon Levy inaugurated the Akua Benjamin Legacy Project. The project recognizes Akua Benjamin’s tireless fight against anti-Black racism locally, nationally and internationally. The project honours her 25 years of dedicated service at the School of Social Work.

Since its inception, the Akua Benjamin Legacy Project has led several significant initiatives, including the Summer Institute (2016) and the Global White Privilege Conference (2018), both aimed at dismantling anti-Black racism and promoting social justice and equity. The Legacy Project also created *50 Years of Black Activism* (2016), and *It Takes a Riot: Race, Rebellion, and Reform* (2017), two educational documentaries that archive the tremendous efforts of Black community activists and the lasting influence of fighting anti-Black racism and supporting social justice.

Most significantly, the Legacy Project’s work gave rise to the Anti-Black Racism Network (ABRN), bringing together university academics, students and staff as well as Black and racialized communities at large, to actively combat anti-Black racism in institutions across Canada. Alongside the ABRN, Akua Benjamin’s work provided the vocabulary and critical lens for anti-Black racism, acting as a precursor to and shaping the PICCABR.

**“I would love to see TMU become the hub of Black scholarship and anti-Black racism knowledge production that supports community development, service and student development.”**

– Akua Benjamin, Professor Emeritus and former Director of TMU’s School of Social Work



# Summary of progress on implementing recommendations

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BELOW: Toronto Metropolitan University's Kerr Hall Quad (2022).

While each of the 14 student, staff and faculty recommendations published in the Climate Review is specific to a particular area or group, they are all interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Collectively, they create an environment where Black students, faculty and staff are prioritized and more likely to feel valued and respected and where they can thrive and feel a sense of belonging. These recommendations can be understood within three thematic action areas:

1. Recruiting, retaining and promoting Black students, faculty and staff campus-wide.
2. Promoting Black studies and scholarship through curriculum teaching and learning, scholarly research, creative activity and graduate studies.
3. Cultivating an environment that creates and sustains an equitable and inclusive campus rooted in mutual respect and shared success, with a specific focus on dismantling anti-Black racism and promoting Black flourishing.





# Table 1: Student recommendation implementation progress

RECOMMENDATION(S)	INSTITUTIONAL LEAD	IMPLEMENTATION STAGE (JULY 2023)			
		Not yet initiated	Stage 1: Planning phase	Stage 2: In progress	Stage 3: Fully implemented
<p><b>Student recommendation #1:</b> A concerted and deliberate effort to diversify disciplines and programs should be undertaken. This would include curriculum, internships, placements and other program practices that impact student success.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic and Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic</p> <p><b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion and Special Advisor to the President, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID) Curriculum Transformation</p>	→			
<p><b>Student recommendation #2:</b> Campus-wide training in EDI across all disciplines and programs that is sustained and reinforced by leadership.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p> <p><b>Co-Lead:</b> Human Resources, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students, Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Affairs and Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic</p>	→	→	→	
<p><b>Student recommendation #3:</b> Black faculty representation needs to be addressed in programs, departments, schools and faculties.</p>	<i>Student recommendation #3 has been transferred to the faculty recommendation section.</i>				
<p><b>Student recommendation #4:</b> Campus safety and security needs to be prioritized to positively impact Black student belonging, with security to be trained in EDI.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Executive Director, Community Safety and Security</p> <p><b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p>	→	→	→	
<p><b>Student recommendation #5:</b> Funding of events, meetings and information sessions that specifically support and centre Black students should be created and/or enhanced.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Vice-Provost, Students</p> <p><b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p>	→	→	→	
<p><b>Student recommendation #6:</b> A dedicated Black student space on campus with the necessary resources allocated to it for Black students to feel safe and a sense of belonging is needed.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Vice-Provost, Students</p> <p><b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion, University Planning Office and Office of the Vice-President, Administration and Operations</p>	→	→	→	



## Table 2: Staff recommendation implementation progress

RECOMMENDATION(S)	INSTITUTIONAL LEAD	IMPLEMENTATION STAGE (JULY 2023)			
		Not yet initiated	Stage 1: Planning phase	Stage 2: In progress	Stage 3: Fully implemented
<p><b>Staff recommendation #1:</b> A comprehensive review of Black staff compensation, grade, rank, and the ways in which Black staff files are handled.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Human Resources <b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p>	→	→	→	
<p><b>Staff recommendation #2:</b> A process of building trust among Black staff that involves both unions and senior management at the university.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Human Resources <b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students, Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic and Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Affairs</p>	→	→	→	
<p><b>Staff recommendation #3:</b> The establishment of programs designed for staff advancement that specifically target Black staff.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Human Resources <b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p>	→	→	→	

### Table 3: Faculty recommendation implementation progress

RECOMMENDATION(S)	INSTITUTIONAL LEAD	IMPLEMENTATION STAGE (JULY 2023)			
		Not yet initiated	Stage 1: Planning phase	Stage 2: In progress	Stage 3: Fully implemented
<p><b>Faculty recommendation #1:</b> The university should design and/or enhance programs for recruiting Black faculty members across all its programs. Cluster hires and other group-based recruitment methods should be experimented with so that new Black faculty entering the university have a community that can be clearly identified.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Affairs</p> <p><b>Co-lead:</b> Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic</p> <p><b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p>	→	→	→	
<p><b>Faculty recommendation #2:</b> Black faculty currently at the university should be given support and resources to deepen, expand and experiment with new and innovative curriculum in Black studies in their departments, programs, and fields.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Affairs</p> <p><b>Co-lead:</b> Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic and Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic</p> <p><b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p>	→	→	→	
<p><b>Faculty recommendation #3:</b> The university should work with contract academic staff to provide them with the tools and resources to apply for tenure track positions. This program should have clear and transparent guidelines for application. Contract lecturers, especially long-term lecturers, should be aware of the differences between CUPE and the TFA.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Affairs</p> <p><b>Co-lead:</b> Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic</p> <p><b>Collaborator:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p>	→	→	→	
<p><b>Faculty recommendation #4:</b> Contract faculty should be given a clear sense of how and why their contracts are not renewed.</p>	This recommendation falls outside the purview of the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism.				

## Table 4: OVPECI recommendation implementation progress

RECOMMENDATION(S)	INSTITUTIONAL LEAD	IMPLEMENTATION STAGE (JULY 2023)			
		Not yet initiated	Stage 1: Planning phase	Stage 2: In progress	Stage 3: Fully implemented
<p><b>OVPECI recommendation #1:</b> The university should engage in a campaign that clarifies the mandate of OVPECI and the work it is intended to do on campus, distinguishing it from other units, specifically the Human Resources unit.</p>	<p><b>Institutional lead:</b> Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion</p>	→	→		



# Student recommendations

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“I am grateful to the students who have used their voices to inform three years of **vital work** to confront anti-Black racism at TMU. With their input, we have gained an even **clearer understanding** of the challenges Black students face at this institution and what we should pursue to address them. This progress represents our ongoing and **collective commitment** to centre their honest feedback and thoughtful ideas to support Black flourishing with high-impact supports, safer spaces and expanded funding for student-led initiatives.”

— Jen McMillen  
Vice-Provost, Students; co-chair of the Student Working Group



The Climate Review revealed persistent and consistent experiences of anti-Black racism at TMU with Black students offering a broad range of reflections on the inequities that have contributed to upholding barriers, limiting opportunities or impacting Black students' overall sense of security and belonging on campus, inside and outside of the classroom.

BELOW: Students in the Global Justice and Change Program examining photo strips (2023).



## STUDENT RECOMMENDATION #1:

**A concerted and deliberate effort to diversify disciplines and programs should be undertaken. This would include curriculum, internships, placements and other program practices that impact student success.**

BELOW: Student, Divine Amayo, in the TMU library (Kenya-Jade Pinto, 2023).



## What has changed?

Relevant goals were developed to meaningfully diversify disciplines and programs that impact Black student success across each area identified in the recommendation.

### Diversifying curriculum

The Student Working Group is committed to building on the foundation of existing curricula to propose a new interdisciplinary undergraduate degree program inclusive of Caribbean, Black and other relevant disciplines. To inform curriculum development and hiring practices, the PICCABR has completed an internal course audit and environmental scan of Black studies programs to benchmark existing diversity in curriculum and course delivery and inform curriculum development and hiring practices. The audit, completed in 2022, identified Black teaching staff across faculties and programs and found 116 courses across the university with Black-, African- and Caribbean-centred content. The group has set a goal to achieve 100 per cent of undergraduate and graduate programs at the university, offering a suite of courses that centre the experiences of Black students, promote Black scholarship and apply principles of anti-Black racism in curriculum, teaching and learning.

### Diversifying internships and placements

Intent on ensuring that experiential learning opportunities reflect the diversity of TMU's student body and the City of Toronto, the Student Working Group has been taking steps to diversify placement sites and internships and work with more Black-owned and operated partners. These opportunities ensure extra-curricular learning for students that complements and intersects with their learning inside the classroom.

## What is next?

The multifaceted nature of these goals and the considerations accompanying university academic procedures and policies will continue to be explored and actioned.





## GLOBAL JUSTICE AND CHANGE PROGRAM

The Global Justice and Change Program enables students to participate in courses where they can explore topics on a global scale using an equity and justice-oriented lens and African-centred and diverse knowledge systems and perspectives. The program was piloted in 2023 and welcomed 39 students in the first cohort.

The series included courses such as:

- ♦ **Repositioning Women in Caribbean Agriculture:** Food Sustainability and Food Sovereignty in Trinidad and Tobago (INT912), taught by Petra Roberts, where students were invited to learn about global food sustainability, food security, and local producers in the region. Students enrolled in this course spent ten days in Trinidad and Tobago, visiting markets and agricultural projects to learn about sustainability and food security in the region.
- ♦ **Films for Change:** Film Festivals and Activism in Hispanic Culture (SPS512) taught by Enriqueta Zafra, where students travel to Panama to learn about the interconnections between film and film festivals and culture and advocacy.
- ♦ **Literatures of the Caribbean (ENG620)**, taught by Hyacinth Simpson, where students engaged with literary texts, films, and musical forms to understand how migration and mass movements have affected English-speaking Caribbean people's identities and experiences in the Caribbean and its diasporas. Students in this course engaged virtually and in person with educational and cultural institutions and organizations in the Caribbean, Canada and the U.K.
- ♦ **African Studies and Beyond (LIR204)** taught by Ndeye Ba, where students are invited to explore African epistemologies and gain an up-close understanding of the rich history, culture and contributions of the continent and its diaspora to knowledge production through an experiential learning trip to Senegal where students can learn directly from local communities. This course is offered for the Spring 2024 term.
- ♦ **Haudenosaunee Leaders and Writers (with Māori component) (HAU400)** taught by Brandon Tehanyatarí:ya'ks Martin, which teaches about two Indigenous cultures: domestic (Haudenosaunee) and international (Māori). Students are invited on an experiential learning trip to the homeland of the international Indigenous culture, the Māori in New Zealand.

All courses, including travel, are fully funded, and applications are open to Canadian citizens and permanent residents who self-identify as Indigenous, Black or racialized, students with disabilities and students experiencing financial barriers. TMU Global leads the program, funded by the Government of Canada's Outbound Student Mobility Pilot Program, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Community Services.

BELOW: Students overlooking a mountain in Panama through the Global Justice and Change Program (2023).



## STUDENT RECOMMENDATION #2:

**Campus-wide training in EDI across all disciplines and programs that is sustained and reinforced by leadership.**



ABOVE: Student, Adriana Hyde, as part of an event for the Global Justice and Change Program (2023).

### What has changed?

Following the recommendation for campus-wide training, **over 16 customized training sessions and workshops have been developed and delivered to nearly 2,000 stakeholders across the university by the Anti-Black Racism Education and Awareness Facilitator, OVPECI.** These include training focusing on anti-Black racism in areas such as unconscious bias, microaggressions, EDI principles, intersectionality, inclusive teaching, learning and hiring. The sessions engaged students, faculty, staff, leaders and alumni in theoretical and practical learning modules across departments such as TMU's Medical Centre, the Chang School of Continuing Education, the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science, Athletics and Recreation and Human Resources.

Additionally, Human Resources led extensive research into EDI competency development for staff, students and faculty to inform the creation of a campus-wide EDI Knowledge and Action Framework. Review the section on staff recommendation number two for more information on this initiative.

### What is next?

In addition, training sessions covering a range of topics that serve to confront anti-Black racism and foster the conditions for Black flourishing and belonging at TMU will be sustained through education and awareness activities delivered directly by the OVPECI and through diffusion in the training they provide to trainers so that these principles can be embedded into their work.

## ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

### ALLYSHIP AND BYSTANDER TRAINING

A training program focused on building allyship and providing bystander training brought together 30 to 35 graduate students in the Faculty of Science in 2022. The workshop, supported by the Dimensions program (refer to page 46), equipped graduate students to better identify and deliberately address instances of anti-Black racism and bias. Plans are underway to expand this training and make it an annual session for all graduate students, including incoming graduate students and their faculty supervisors.

## ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

### MANDATORY TRAINING ON BLACK STUDENT FLOURISHING

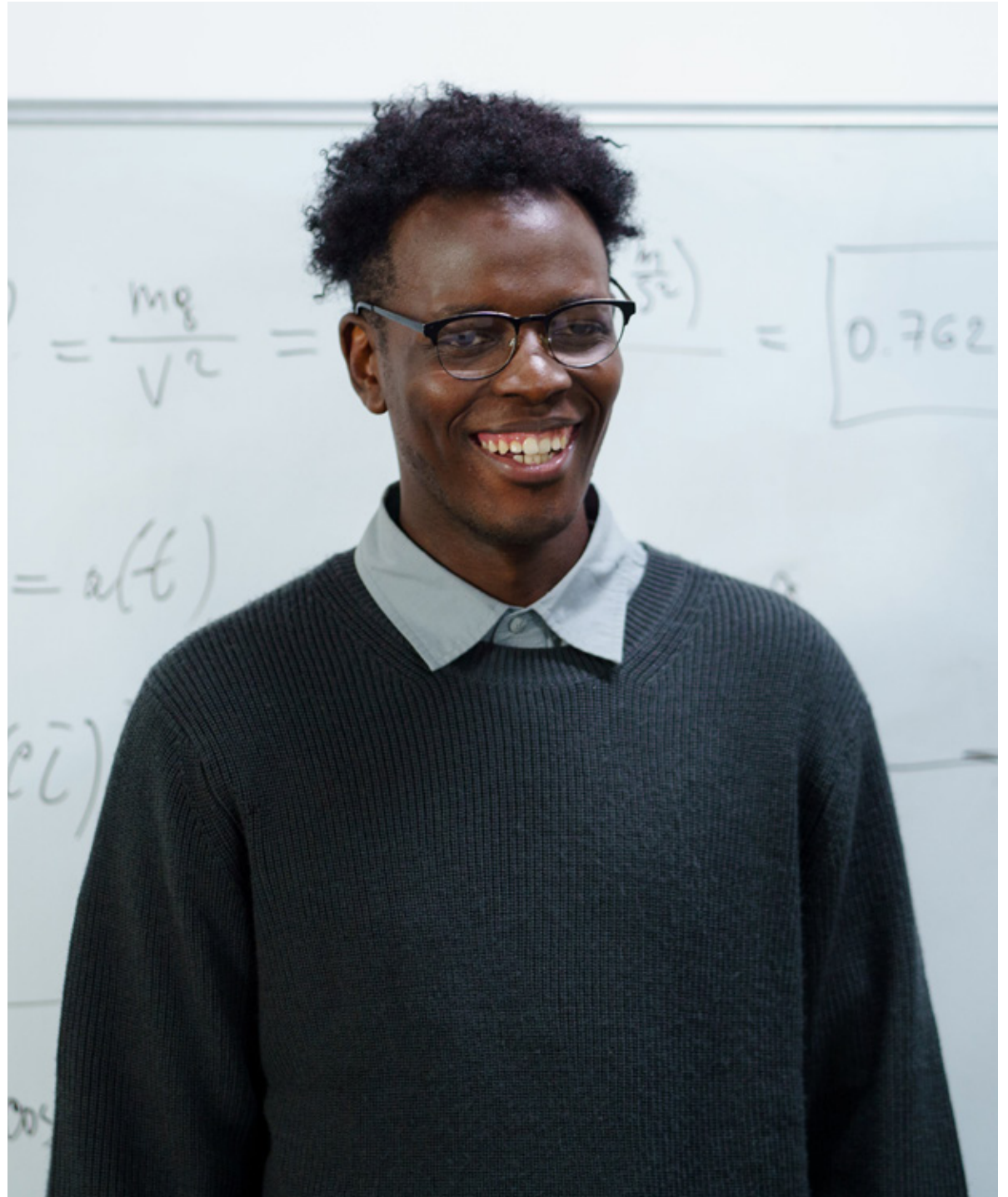
Student Affairs hosted a webinar designed to equip staff to better support Black students' flourishing at TMU. As part of the session, a panel of students shared their intersectional experiences at the university and staff were encouraged to reflect on their roles in supporting Black students on campus. The webinar was open to Student Affairs staff and mandatory for all directors and associate directors in the department. It represents one of several EDI training opportunities provided by Student Affairs.



### STUDENT RECOMMENDATION #3:

**Black faculty representation needs to be addressed in programs, departments, schools and faculties.**

*Please note this recommendation was transferred to the faculty recommendations section (refer to page 45).*



## STUDENT RECOMMENDATION #4:

# Campus safety and security needs to be prioritized to positively impact Black student belonging, with security to be trained in EDI.

BELOW: Lance Campbell, Security Operations Manager, delivering an address at the Black Excellence Mixer (2020).



## What has changed?

To prioritize Black student belonging and safety on campus, the PICCABR has engaged Community Safety and Security in developing and implementing strategies ranging from more transparent complaints processes and EDI training to Black community engagement and increasing public awareness.

The Strategic Outreach and Response Team (SORT) was piloted within Community Safety and Security to encourage non-uniformed responses to incidents that centre support, rapport building and community engagement when appropriate. **Since its launch in spring 2022, there have been approximately 4,500 interactions in which a team of SORT community engagement and outreach staff were deployed instead of a high-profile security response.**

This initiative is accompanied by proactive efforts co-led by the OVPS and the Executive Director, Community Safety and Security, to host events that provide opportunities for Black students to engage with community security departments in social settings as well as efforts to connect with departments such as Human Resources, Housing and Residence Life, Student Wellbeing, Student Care and Athletics to review interactions and how students can be better informed of security's involvement in the enforcement of relevant policies and procedures.

The BSAC was consulted on these efforts, resulting in a social mixer that invited Black students to get to know the Community Safety and Security team.

**“As the leaders of safety and security on campus, we must ensure that all of our community members, especially Black students, faculty, staff and members from other equity-deserving groups, feel safe while trying to work, learn and grow on campus. How we achieve this is by better understanding the needs of our community, by being allies and undergoing any changes necessary to be the best support we can be for the community we serve.”**

— Lance Campbell,  
Manager, Security Operation, Community Safety and Security

Beyond investment in proactive community-building, efforts have been underway to review and update Community Safety and Security processes from a confronting anti-Black racism lens. The OVPECI has supported the team in embedding anti-Black racism awareness into the onboarding process for new safety and security staff on campus. Additionally, a consultation was held to inform a revised and front-facing complaints process that emphasizes transparency and accessibility.

## What is next?

Community Safety and Security will continue to pilot the SORT initiative, finalize the revised complaints process and collaborate with the OVPECI to develop e-learning and awareness sessions covering anti-Black racism, unconscious bias and building cultural competency.

Additionally, the team is revising its website to foster a better sense of community and understanding through education and awareness of Community Safety and Security initiatives to promote community engagement and a sense of belonging on campus. The team will continue to focus on increasing the number of proactive community-building opportunities with Black students through social events.



## RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS OF ANTI-BLACK RACISM

OVPECI's Human Rights Services administers the university's confidential complaint resolution process under the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy. The office receives complaints related to anti-Black racism from students, faculty and staff. It works to resolve such matters in ways that address individual incidents of anti-Black racism as well as concerns regarding systemic anti-Black racism within TMU's learning and working environments. The university's complaint resolution processes may include investigations or alternative resolutions of complaints, and the office also incorporates restorative justice principles and approaches in its work.

In April 2022, Human Rights Services hired a Senior Resolution Officer and Investigator with specialized expertise in anti-Black racism to lead efforts to enhance the office's alternative dispute resolution and restorative justice offerings, including through an anti-Black racism lens. This position was made permanent by the university in 2023.



## STUDENT RECOMMENDATION #5:

### Funding of events, meetings and information sessions that specifically support and centre Black students should be created and/or enhanced.

#### What has changed?

The OVPS, in partnership with the OVPECI, has made significant progress on implementing the recommendation to strengthen events, meetings and information sessions that specifically support and centre Black students.

A core element of implementing this recommendation is to amplify Black student voices and experiences on campus and apply community-driven approaches to promote Black flourishing. This commitment was first demonstrated through engagement with the BSAC and solidified through initiatives like the Let's Talk: Amplify Black Voices program, which aimed to strengthen linkages between students and OVPS and invite more Black students to intentionally shape the university's work in confronting anti-Black racism.

**The Black Initiatives Fund, an extension of the Student Initiatives Fund, was also established to equip Black students with resources and support to lead their initiatives. During the 2022-2023 academic year, the fund released nearly \$25,000 for Black student-led initiatives focusing on projects that amplified Black mental health, queerness, accessibility, gender identity and Black expression.**

Next, a new position was created and filled by OVPS to directly respond to recommendations in the Climate Review and elevate previous work being done to support Black student success in the Tri-Mentoring Program. The Black Student Support Facilitator has continued to develop opportunities, resources and networks to promote student success and elevate Black students at the university. Since the role was launched in 2021, the Black Student Support Facilitator has cultivated an online community of nearly 600 Black students while offering intentional opportunities for academic, personal, career and social development activities for Black students.

In 2021, TMU's Career, Co-op and Student Success Centre and the Tri-Mentoring Program launched the Race Forward Program. This annual initiative supports Black students' career decisions with professional development training, networking opportunities and mentorship. Monthly learning sessions were also convened throughout 2022-2023 to promote Black excellence through academic, social and emotional support and group mentorship. These thoughtfully designed events invited Black students to co-create understanding through open dialogue, network with Black faculty and staff, build confidence and psychological safety and strengthen social connectedness and support systems.

Tailored events also provided students with tools to support wellness and financial management and opportunities to engage in culturally relevant and gender-responsive discussions around topics such as Black hair. **Over 100 students have attended the Let's Talk Hair programs, many of whom report leaving with a strong sense of community and gratitude for a space to share their natural hair experiences.**

**"What we don't get to talk about in our curriculum is self-care - and it's a direct contributor to our mental well-being. As Black people, our hair is so important to us, so to have a seminar like this — to educate us, to get us engaged — it motivates us. It shows us that other people care. It drives us to take care of ourselves."**

— Black student who attended the Let's Talk Hair session

BELOW: Black Excellence Committee at the Black Excellence Mixer (2024).





Other tailored events were regularly held, such as Connect2Flourish, which offered group mentorship sessions inviting Black students and faculty to access resources and learn from one another.

Several large-scale annual events, such as the Black Excellence Graduation Celebration, mobilized the broader university in commemoration of the accomplishments of Black students. The celebration and the annual Black Excellence Mixer were organized by the Black Excellence Committee, a collaboration between OVPECI, the Tri-Mentoring Program led by the OVPS, the Talent Management Centre of Expertise in Human Resources and Magnet.

## What is next?

OVPS will engage with OVPECI and the President's Office to establish an efficient and ongoing governance model for engagement with the incoming BSAC.

Additionally, Student Affairs will continue to offer Black student support opportunities such as group mentoring for Black students, drop-in lunches, and programs like Let's Talk Space in the Black Student Lounge throughout the year and participate in planning annual, Black-centred events.

### ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## BLACK ON CAMPUS ORIENTATION SERIES

Black on Campus was an orientation week series provided by the Tri-Mentoring Program, Student Life and Learning Support to build relevant community programming for Black students at the start of the fall semester. The series focused on wellness, finances, community building, and connections for Black students.

**The Black Initiatives Fund, an extension of the Student Initiatives Fund, was also established to equip Black students with resources and support to lead their initiatives. During the 2022-2023 academic year, the fund released nearly \$25,000 for Black student-led initiatives focusing on projects that amplified Black mental health, queerness, accessibility, gender identity and Black expression.**

### ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE FOR BLACK STUDENTS

The Office of the Registrar launched a student recruitment initiative dedicated to collaborating with internal stakeholders and conducting community outreach to engage students facing barriers to accessing university education. As part of this initiative, the office partnered with Pathways to Education in Toronto and has hosted ten events since 2020 to highlight resources and support equity-deserving communities in exploring higher education options. The department also hosted a virtual open house for prospective students from equity-deserving groups; offering sessions focused on Black student experiences, TMU Student Union's equity service centres and Race Forward.

BELOW: Students, Sonnet Hines and Sara Eyre, at the Black Excellence Mixer (2024).





## EVENT AND PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS WITH BLACK STUDENT GROUPS

As part of a highly detailed plan to identify and prioritize relationship building with equity-deserving groups, Athletics and Recreation established meaningful program partnerships with Black student groups. From a basketball tournament and team social to aerobics, spin, yoga and dance classes, the department organized several key events in partnership with and supporting Black and international students and student groups between 2022 and 2023. These events were organized with partners such as the Black Business Student Association, TMU ENACTUS, the Black Law Students Association, the Black Business Graduate Student Association, the BIPOC Student Collective, the TMU African Student Association and the International Student Association.



ABOVE: Attendees at the 15th annual Viola Desmond Awards (2023).

## CONNECTING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

TMU's Career, Co-op and Student Success Centre established partnerships with external organizations such as Scotiabank, Accelerate Her Future and Onyx Initiative to deliver and promote career development and mentorship programs for Black students on campus.



## BLACK INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELCOME EVENT

International Student Enrolment, Education and Inclusion hosts an annual meetup for incoming Black international students. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by students who identify as both Black and new to the country, this intersectional event seeks to foster a sense of belonging by creating opportunities for students to better understand the student experience at TMU, meet peers with shared experiences and celebrate their university admission.

## RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK WOMEN, PAST AND PRESENT

New Black community-centred events build upon long-standing high-profile initiatives led by the OVPECI, such as the Viola Desmond Awards and Bursary Program, which recognizes the self-determination, resistance, leadership, joy and legacies of Black women across generations. 2023 marked the 15th anniversary since the Viola Desmond Awards first began celebrating Black women who make a powerful difference in their communities as students, faculty, staff and alumni.



BELOW: Black students, faculty, staff and community at the Black Sovereignty Initiative at TMU's Urban Farm (2022).



#### ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

On June 23, 2022, Human Rights Services and the Lincoln Alexander School of Law partnered with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to host a conference to mark the 60th anniversary of the Ontario Human Rights Code. The conference included dedicated sessions on anti-Black racism and race-based discrimination, including a presentation from the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit.

#### ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## BLACK FOOD SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH URBAN FARMING

TMU's Urban Farm welcomes Black students, faculty, staff and community to join dynamic and engaging programming through ecological rooftop farming and food justice initiatives. In 2022, the farm launched the Harvest Collective and Learning Circle, a Black Food Sovereignty initiative at the Daphne Cockwell Complex rooftop, which aims to engage the community through the multifaceted lens of growing and enjoying food. Participants are invited to explore and learn about topics grounded by the program's four pillars: food literacy, food and social justice, environmental stewardship and community healing. In addition, participants in the Learning Circle can harvest and enjoy the culturally significant crops across the African diaspora.

## STUDENT RECOMMENDATION #6:

**A dedicated Black student space on campus with the necessary resources allocated to it for Black students to feel safe and a sense of belonging is needed. These resources should involve funds for staffing and programming for Black students.**

The Black Student Lounge (BSL) was designed as a dedicated space on campus where Black students across diversities and experiences can study, rest, meet friends, build community, attend events and experience joy. The BSL aims to provide a purposeful and identity-affirming space where Black students at TMU can recharge, foster connection and feel a sense of belonging.

The BSL was first created in 2019 by the OVPECI and re-launched in 2022 by the PICCABR's Student Working Group. Since its launch, the BSL has become a hub for Black student-centred events, meetups and programming. Black student experience initiatives were designed with the support of 25 Black student staff. The Black Student Experience website and the Diversity Self-ID data have enabled the Student Working Group to share support opportunities with more Black students and increase awareness about the BSL amongst Black students. These efforts have contributed significantly to creating a more inclusive and supportive campus for Black students.

### What is next?

The Black Student Support Facilitator will continue to organize engagements in the BSL throughout the year. Additionally, Student Affairs will continue to identify and address the BSL's operating logistics, including establishing a process for space bookings for Black student groups seeking to use the lounge, determining a logistics framework for granting access and ensuring responsible use of the BSL on an ongoing basis

“The BSL is like a home to me. It’s a space where the dynamics have characteristics of my Nigerian culture, and I enjoy engaging and interacting with the people. We speak a universal language only Black/African people could know; not necessarily in terms of our vocabulary but more so the intentions, connotations and energy driving our communication.”

—Oluwaseyitodun Akinyelure  
Student at TMU

BELOW: The Chmst performing at the Black Excellence Committee (2024).







ABOVE: Student at the Black Excellence Mixer reading the intergenerational dialogue guide (2024).

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## BLACK-LED STUDENT COMMITTEES AND GROUPS ACROSS CAMPUS

TMU has a vibrant campus community comprising over 200 student clubs and organizations. While some engage students around shared interests and programs of study, others bring students from equity-deserving groups together around shared lived experiences. There are several Black, African and Caribbean student-led clubs at the university, including, but not limited to, the Black Nursing Student Association, Black Fashion Students Organization, Black Business Graduate Students Association, Caribbean Students' Association, National Society of Black Engineers and CloudFlo and the African Student Association.

The Ted Rogers Black Business Association is one of the most prominent and active Black-focused student groups within TMU. The group seeks to provide Black students with critical tools to become future change-makers. Notable initiatives organized by the group include:

- **Working Without Worries:** an event held in collaboration with the TRSM Women in Technology Management and Ted Rogers Pride Alliance to unpack critically interrogate harassment in the workplace from an intersectional lens.
- **30 Under 30:** an event which invited professionals across diversities, half of whom identified as Black, to meet and network with students.
- **Masterclass of Success:** a professional development initiative hosted in collaboration with the Ted Rogers Sales Club and the Human Resources Student Association.

Several Black student advisory groups have also been established to help ensure that Black student voices inform decision making at the university. The Black Student Advisory Committee is a group of students led by the Black Student Support Facilitator in the Tri-Mentoring Program, acting to provide and support an exceptional student experience for Black students.

This year, students in the Black Student Advisory Committee are organizing TMU's inaugural Black Flourishing conference for staff, students and faculty. The conference will feature performing artists, keynote speeches and student-led sessions on issues such as student leadership, personal branding and relationship building.

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## BLACK STUDENT GROUP MENTORING

Working from an anti-oppressive framework, the Tri-Mentoring Program, Student Life and Learning Support offer Black student group mentoring to support Black students in finding a sense of belonging while empowering them to discover what they need to be successful in their post-secondary journey.

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## COUNSELLING SUPPORT FOR BLACK STUDENTS

The Centre for Student Development and Counselling has been building out specific pathways of support for Black students, including:

- hiring more Black counsellors
- creating a system to match students who request to work with a counsellor from a shared background
- developing expedited pathways of care
- providing group therapy to enable healing from race-based and intergenerational trauma
- creating focus groups to understand student needs better
- building connections with the Black student peer-support group

In connection with this initiative and partnership with Student Integrated Health and Wellbeing, Athletics and Recreation has embedded a new Black-identified counsellor to provide culturally competent support to TMU's student-athlete community.



ABOVE: Two Black graduating students at the Black Excellence Graduation Celebration (2023).



## AWARDS AND BURSARIES FOR BLACK STUDENTS

In addition to the ground-breaking Postdoctoral Fellowships for Black Scholars program launched through the PICCABR and the Office of the Provost, several awards and bursaries have been established across the university to support Black students at undergraduate and graduate levels.

Awards include but are not limited to

- **The Black and/or Indigenous Heritage Varsity Student-Athlete Award:** The TMU Black and/or Indigenous Heritage Varsity Student Athlete Award was established in 2021 by the Athletics and Recreation department in concert with Ontario University Athletics and its 20 member institutions to provide enhanced financial support to members of Black and Indigenous communities. This athletic financial award is exempt from the general ceiling for athletes in Ontario and is permitted to compound with existing financial awards athletes may receive.
- **The BlackNorth Initiative Scholarships:** The BlackNorth Initiative established a renewable entrance scholarship in 2021 for Black students entering their first year at the Lincoln Alexander School of Law's JD program in the class of 2024.
- **The BLSA Black Excellence Award:** The inaugural Black Law Students' Association (BLSA) class of 2023 established the Black Excellence Award for Black students entering their first year of the Lincoln Alexander School of Law's JD program.
- **The Canadian Association of Black Lawyers Award:** The Canadian Association of Black Lawyers established an award in 2021 for Black students entering their first year of the Lincoln Alexander School of Law's JD program.
- **Canada-wide IBET Momentum Fellowship:** The Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science launched the Canada-wide IBET Momentum Fellowship, offering two full-time Black and Indigenous PhD students up to \$30,000 annually over four academic years. The fellowship aims to change the engineering landscape in Canada by reducing barriers for Indigenous and Black students and creating a pipeline of future changemakers in industry and education.
- **The Enbridge Award for Black Students:** Enbridge established an award in 2022 for upper-year Black students in the Lincoln Alexander School of Law's JD program.
- **Faculty of Community Services Black Student Awards:** The Faculty of Community Services established the Black Student Awards to support the academic journeys of Black undergraduate and graduate students across the Faculty.
- **The TRSM Anti-Black Awareness Committee Bursary:** In the 2021-2022 academic year, The Ted Rogers School of Management (TRSM) Anti-Black Racism Awareness Committee awarded a bursary to three first-year Black students.
- **The Ted Rogers MBA Black Graduate Leadership Awards:** The Ted Rogers MBA Black Graduate Leadership Awards supports three Black graduate students pursuing their studies at the Ted Rogers School.
- **Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS) Black Graduate Student Awards:** The YSGPS established a series of awards to recognize excellence and/or alleviate some of the financial burden associated with graduate education. The awards include the Black Graduate Student Fellowship, the Black Graduate Student Scholarship and the Black Graduate Student Bursary. The 2023 YSGPS Black Graduate Student Awards were adjudicated by the Dimensions YSGPS lead, Black faculty members and the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, YSGPS. In addition, the first cohort of the new Postdoctoral Fellowship for Black Scholars (administered by YSGPS and funded by the PICCABR and the Office of the Provost) joined TMU in the fall of 2023.

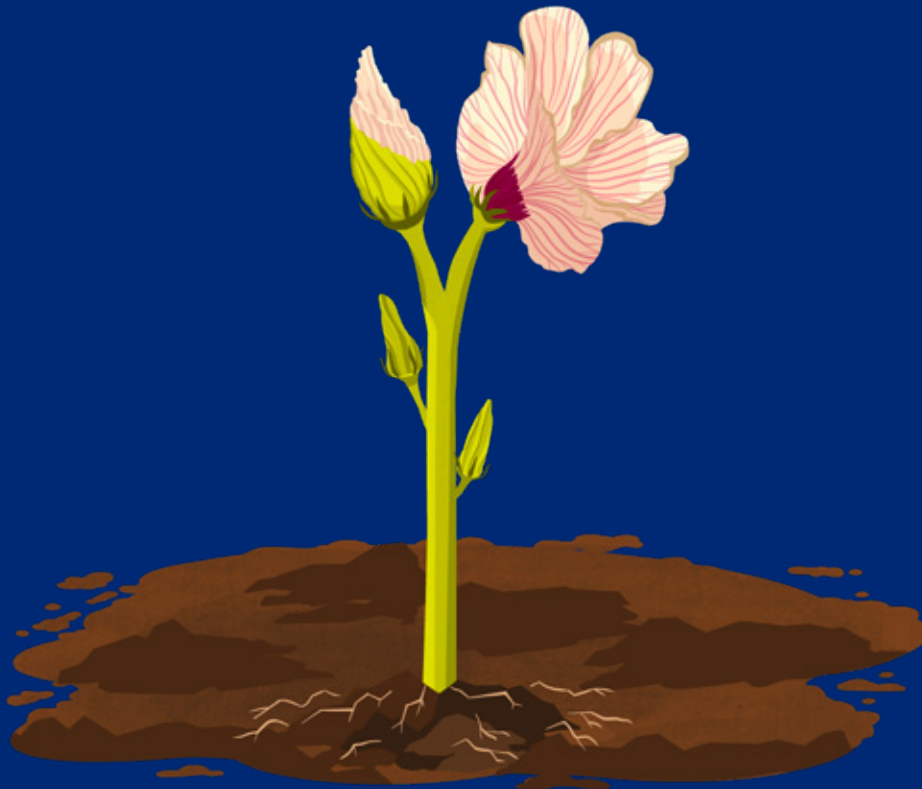


# Staff recommendations

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“When released, the Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review Report made clear the work the university needed to undertake to seriously and **impactfully confront** anti-Black racism on our campus and in our workspaces. Since its release, **significant work** has been done to address inequities, build trust between the university and our Black staff, and create a strong foundation for the work to come. While we are pleased with the progress made so far, we know it is only the start; this is an **ongoing commitment** and journey to creating spaces where our Black staff can thrive.”

— Saeed Zolfaghari  
Vice-President, Administration and Operations;  
executive chair, Staff Working Group



The Climate Review highlighted how participating Black staff at TMU have experienced anti-Black racism in the workplace. These ranged from expressions of feeling that Black staff were being overlooked for promotions to having their qualifications treated unequally to disproportionately lacking the community or familial connections and mentors that could lead to more professional opportunities.

Since its publication, the PICCABR has been working across teams to identify disparities, build networks, respond to the recommendations and introduce interventions to enable Black staff at TMU to thrive in and beyond their work.

BELOW: Audrey Thompson in conversation at the Medical School Fireside Chat (2023).



## STAFF RECOMMENDATION #1:

# A comprehensive review of Black staff compensation, grade, rank and the ways in which Black staff files are handled.

BELOW: Michelle Forde at the Alan Shepard Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Awards (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2024).



## What has changed?

Measuring compensation, grade, rank and treatment of Black staff offers critical insight to support the university in identifying disparities and addressing systemic anti-Black racism in staff experiences. The implementation of this staff recommendation has been led by Human Resources in collaboration with OVPECI and guided by two mutually reinforcing goals:

1. Complete a review of compensation data, policies and practices to identify barriers that impact the compensation of Black staff at TMU.
2. Create and implement a comprehensive compensation framework, including guiding principles and related policies and practices, to address barriers to fair and equitable compensation for Black staff at the university.

Phase I of the review has been completed, and findings and recommendations were presented. Recommendations included:

- Creating compensation policies and standardized practices to hold leaders accountable and remove discretionary practices that can lead to bias.
- Updating talent processes to better reflect the current workforce and labour market context such as job evaluation, inclusive hiring practices, equitable promotion processes, etc.
- Implementing a governance structure to conduct annual reviews and set a salary administration policy. This should include an accountability framework.
- Developing inclusive mindsets and behaviours for leadership teams and management roles and focusing on building equitable support systems for employees who identify as Black.

Immediately after Phase I was completed, Human Resources took actions to implement the recommendations, focusing on two aspects:

- A more in-depth pay gap analysis, conducted by an external compensation consultant to identify systemic barriers that may impact the pay of Black staff and identify pay gaps at the individual level, as well as recommend remediation measures to close the gap.
- A Total Compensation Transformation driven by Total Compensation in Human Resources with a focus on compensation policy review, streamlining compensation administration process and procedures to ensure EDI is embedded and accountability is built into the process.

Completing the Anti-Black Racism Pay Gap Analysis required deep technical skills in statistical analysis. Therefore, an external consultant was engaged to conduct the analysis.

- **Consultant selection:** A detailed request for proposals outlining TMU's request was issued to three qualified consultants in October 2022. After a rigorous selection process, the finalist was selected in February 2023.
- **Data collection:** The project kicked off in early March 2023. The teams spent time collecting and understanding the data and aligning analysis methodology and approaches.



## What is next?

Once the in-depth data analysis is complete, it is expected to lead to Phase II steps, including:

- Determine if there is any pay gap between Black and non-racialized staff; if so, a remediation method would be recommended.
- Present analysis results to the executive co-chairs and obtain final approval.
- Upon approval, the pay adjustment for the final cases will be implemented.

Upon completion of Phase II activities, the team will begin a third phase of activities by engaging external consultants, focusing on developing the technical aspects of the compensation framework, which includes:

- updating a job evaluation plan that continues to be federally and provincially compliant with pay equity
- conducting market competitive study
- developing salary ranges
- conducting pay equity analysis

In addition to these steps, Total Compensation in Human Resources will continue to review and revise existing procedures, as well as create new ones, to address how anti-Black racism is present in compensation practices. The goal is to enhance transparency, fairness and equity in the university's job evaluation and compensation practices through:



ABOVE: Black staff in Athletics and Recreation on the phone (2023).

### Job evaluation

- Re-evaluating jobs using the new job evaluation plan to ensure consistent job levelling.
- Reviewing, developing and implementing a comprehensive salary administration policy to clarify off-cycle adjustment criteria, guidelines and governance.
- Providing robust training and establishing structured processes and procedures to ensure future job evaluations are conducted consistently and fairly.

### Pay equity

- Establishing methodology, tools and processes for regular internal pay equity review and audit.
- Identifying gaps, their root cause and recommending remediation.
- Developing targets that promote equitable pay practices and regularly tracking the progress towards and maintenance of these targets.

### Exception management

- Establishing a process where exceptions to talent policies and practices must be reviewed for sign-off.
- For roles that have frequent exceptions, job descriptions must go through review and re-evaluation to address gaps and prevent future exceptions.

### Communication and education

- Ongoing training and communication of the new job evaluation plan, salary administration policy, guidelines and process to managers and employees.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION #2:

# A process of building trust among Black staff that involves both unions and senior management at the university.

BELOW: (Top) Debbie Thompson at the Black Excellence Mixer (2024). (Bottom) Aneka Olbino and Bianca Marryshow at the Black Excellence Mixer (2023).



## What has changed?

In response to concerns raised by Black staff, such as experiences of unequal treatment and reduced opportunity for promotion, the Staff Working Group introduced two initiatives to build trust among Black staff: the creation of a Talent Acquisition Centre of Expertise (TACoE) and the development of the TMU EDI Knowledge and Action Framework.

### The Talent Acquisition Centre of Expertise (TACoE)

The Climate Review identified that Black employees did not trust the university's recruitment processes and did not feel there was fairness in who receives interviews. As part of addressing this, TACoE was created within Human Resources. The centre is supported by a Director of Talent Acquisition, a new role filled in 2021. The team also includes Talent Acquisition Specialists who are highly skilled and trained to proactively guide and lead hiring leaders in the end-to-end recruitment process. Together, the team developed a Talent Acquisition Strategy to support transforming recruitment processes and policies from a traditional staffing approach into a model focused on acquiring and retaining exemplary and diverse talent. Strategic goals to realize the vision to create a more inclusive process and promote Black flourishing include:

- establishing credibility
- prioritizing accountability
- building trust

## EDI in the recruitment life cycle

To support the goal of building trust among Black staff as recommended by the Climate Review, a full audit of recruitment practices and procedures was conducted. As a result, the TACoE established a standardized and transparent recruitment process for all centrally supported vacancy hiring, with principles of EDI embedded in key areas of the recruitment life cycle. Some examples include:

- **In the job posting:** Equivalency language on job postings has been developed to recognize experience equivalent to formal education for recruitment activities. This supports the EDI objective as it considers the valuable life experiences of candidates and helps reduce bias, discretion and systemic barriers for Black candidates and candidates from other equity-deserving groups.
- **At the sourcing and outreach stage:** Broader outreach to equity-deserving communities and networks, including the Black Faculty and Staff Community Network, to target and attract diverse candidates to open vacancies. Implementing the Diversity Self-ID at job applications provides analytics on talent pools and increases awareness of where barriers exist in the recruitment process. This includes diversity data sharing when planning a recruitment strategy with hiring leaders, training and support for more inclusive hiring procedures and prioritization in sourcing and screening diverse candidates to create robust pipelines of talent.

- **When screening candidates:** When shortlisting candidates for interviews, Talent Acquisition Specialists prescreen and showcase qualified candidates who identify as Black and/or with another equity-deserving group to hiring leaders.
- **During the interview stage:** Enhancements to the interview process include flexible interview logistics, coaching hiring panels on inclusive hiring best practices, and sharing interview questions with candidates in advance. These activities offer a more inclusive approach and a focused and intentional experience for all participants. The interview panel selection process includes members with lived experience and diverse representation. Interview questions about EDI/anti-Black racism are also included to showcase lived experience as an asset and to help promote and emphasize TMU's values and intent to have a diverse workforce.

These changes have allowed TMU to provide a more fair and transparent recruitment and hiring process and hold leaders accountable to inclusive best practices and guidelines. In doing so, the university moves closer to its goal of building trust and credibility with Black candidates and staff in the recruitment process.

BELOW: Shurla Charles-Forbes speaking at the Innovations in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion across TMU Soup and Substance (2023).



“Since the report’s release, I have seen more Black staff present at tables where we were traditionally non-existent. I am very excited about the partnership and progress behind the TMU EDI Knowledge and Action Framework as it will be the foundation for policies and processes, guiding our behaviours as we continue to address anti-Black racism to create an inclusive and diverse campus where our Black faculty, staff and students can flourish.”

— Shurla Charles-Forbes,  
Director, Talent Management Centre of Expertise

## The TMU EDI Knowledge and Action Framework

To ensure that all leaders and employees possess a foundational competency and understanding of EDI and anti-Black racism, Human Resources, in collaboration with the OVPECI, OVPFA, OVPS and OVPA, developed a TMU EDI Knowledge and Action Framework.

The TMU EDI Knowledge and Action Framework was developed over two years and stemmed from discussions with the ABR Staff Working Committee, who collectively agreed that building trust required a **foundational competency and knowledge level in EDI/anti-Black racism across the TMU community**. While the PICCABR recognized that there are pockets of EDI expertise across the community, it is inconsistent for all employees and leaders.

To begin this work, the team focused on developing competencies about what EDI and addressing anti-Black racism means in a TMU context and to provide a foundation to support the community in increasing their knowledge, understanding and application of EDI, anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism. The development of the competencies also provided a method through which to hold people accountable. The framework will also embed EDI into our policies, practices, education and behaviours as we move towards making systemic changes.

Developing this framework involved several critical steps:

- best practice research within the industry to determine if such a model exists
- external consultations
- two rounds of internal consultations

The first round of internal consultations involved 16 stakeholder groups and confirmed the need for a model, focus area, audience and delivery channel. The data was analyzed and a second round of internal consultations was conducted, leading to the selected model. The information was further analyzed, and after several meetings with key stakeholders from the OVPECI, OVPFA, OVPS and the OVPA, the findings were discussed and the framework was finalized.

The development of this framework was highly collaborative, led by the Director, Talent Management Centre of Expertise in Human Resources and supported by the OVPS, the OVPFA, OVPA and OVPECI.



## ATHLETICS AND RECREATION ANTI-BLACK RACISM REVIEW

Athletics and Recreation has participated in extensive and ongoing anti-racism training. Between October 2020 and September 2022, approximately 200 full-time and part-time staff participated in over 25 hours of training on confronting anti-racism, EDI, identifying and responding to microaggressions and challenging unconscious bias. Some trainings were delivered by the OVPECI's Education and Awareness Facilitator, Anti-Black Racism, while others were externally facilitated.

In 2021, Athletics and Recreation led an extensive and comprehensive department-wide effort to address systemic racism. The department conducted a study of several industry reports, including [TMU's Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review](#), [Ontario University Athletics' Anti-Racism Report](#) and [McMaster University's Towards Inclusive Excellence Report](#). The review culminated in the identification of eight activities and areas of focus to confront

anti-Black racism for the department to undertake, including forming a BIPOC Staff Advisory Group, developing a statement and resource web page, creating social justice content, strengthening policy frameworks, intentional recruitment, representative hiring, creating direct work opportunities, training of part-time staff and engaging student representatives. In addition, 17 individual action items were identified. Every staff member across the Athletics and Recreation department was assigned to one of the focus areas, ensuring collective effort and shared responsibility in cultivating systemic change.

The result of the department's efforts to meaningfully confront anti-Black racism was wide-reaching, impactful and multi-faceted.

The action groups tasked with strengthening recruitment and hiring created an inclusive hiring practices guide specifically for the department. This guide, which includes best practices around training for those leading hiring, recruitment, interview and evaluation processes, hiring panel composition, hiring decision making and onboarding, was reviewed in consultation with Human Resources and the OVPECI.

The group also incorporated TMU's Diversity Self-ID questions and questions related to workplace safety and harassment into the bi-annual department-based Staff Safety and Wellbeing Assessment. These additional questions allow a more robust intersectional lens through which the department can use the anonymous survey to better understand and support the experiences of Black students, faculty and staff and those across other equity-deserving groups. Diversity Self-ID reporting was also used to launch a regular auditing cycle of full-time and part-time staff representation and retention over time. Finally, the group developed targeted recruitment strategies to address issues of long-standing underrepresentation in industry-specific positions and promote a diverse candidate pool. For example, when recruiting for the role of athletic therapist, intentional recruitment channels were identified to help encourage a targeted and more diverse candidate pool.



## What is next?

### EDI in the recruitment life cycle

To further reduce bias and improve transparency in the hiring process, efforts to standardize the recruitment process will continue. Human Resources will continue to collaborate with OVPECI to develop training for recruiting and hiring leaders, and an audit of short-term hiring processes will be conducted.

A recruitment policy that governs non-academic staff hiring at all levels has been drafted to facilitate and govern a fair, inclusive and transparent recruitment process for internal and external candidates. In addition, it will set expectations for posting, sourcing, interviewing, and evaluating candidates with hiring leaders to build an equitable, diverse and high-quality workforce at the university.

Finally, efforts to enhance reporting and technology to measure and track the progress of diversity hiring are ongoing.

### The TMU EDI Knowledge and Action Framework

Progress towards implementing the TMU EDI Knowledge and Action Framework will continue. This next phase will centre on developing and implementing a robust multi-year, university-wide EDI program. Activities underway include:

- Finalizing definitions that will guide the framework.
- Finalizing the EDI Knowledge and Action Framework learning strategy which includes the learning objectives, topics (including priority topics for development), audience, channels of delivery and evaluation criteria.
- Finalizing the governance structure and terms of reference for the working groups and committees.
- Finalizing the proposed program plan in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Selecting vendors for content development and delivery.
- Procuring a learning management system to house the EDI learning modules, allowing broad access to learning across the community and supporting the completion tracking.
- Launching the EDI Knowledge and Action Framework learning program.

The EDI Knowledge and Action program plan will be implemented in phases. During the first year of program implementation, anti-Black racism will be included as one of the key focus areas.

BELOW: Nikki Waheed at the Alan Shepard Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Awards (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2024).



## STAFF RECOMMENDATION #3:

### The establishment of programs designed for staff advancement that specifically target Black staff.

#### What has changed?

As a foundational step before implementing a program designed for Black staff advancement, a new performance and development program for Management and Confidential group (MAC) and senior administration was successfully launched. The program was designed to ensure all employees receive regular feedback and coaching and contribute to EDI by ensuring fair and transparent processes. It includes an EDI performance objective for all leaders to measure three core areas: hiring, building an inclusive environment and personal and team EDI development. This holds leaders accountable for creating and supporting diverse teams and inclusive environments.

A microsite with resources and reference materials was developed to provide sustainable support and tools for leaders and employees. Additionally, with the support of the OVPECI, nearly 50 sessions were delivered by the Talent Management Centre of Expertise to introduce participants to the new program and provide guidance on objective setting, how to prevent bias and barriers to inclusion and applying empathy through an EDI lens. Leaders are encouraged to use the 2022 update to the Diversity Self-ID data to inform their KPIs and actions in response to the EDI objective in their performance plan.

As another foundational step, university-wide leadership competencies are in development. This process has included best practice research and over 15 internal and external consultations with key stakeholders across disciplines and ranks. The team has identified themes, processes and experiential best practices that will be used to implement the leadership competencies.

#### What is next?

The next phase of the performance and development work will emphasize accountability, seeking opportunities to review EDI objectives with an anti-Black racism lens, holding leaders accountable to demonstrate inclusive leadership behaviours and practices and refining learning sessions. Additionally, the Leadership Competencies will launch, providing the foundation for developing a program for the advancement of Black staff.

BELOW: Pamela Appelt shaking hands with Black TMU faculty and staff at the Viola Desmond Awards (2020).



**“In Human Resources, we are working to implement systemic changes into every stage of the employee lifecycle to address the recommendations made in the Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review Report. For example, the implementation of the Diversity Self-ID at job application allows us to understand our talent pools to increase diversity in our hiring and address barriers in the recruitment process. Introducing a consistent EDI objective for all leaders in our performance and development program holds leaders accountable by establishing an expectation of inclusive leadership in how they recruit and the work environment they create. In the coming year, we look forward to rolling out a new knowledge and action framework that will include workshops on understanding and addressing anti-Black racism.**

**We know that there is much work still to be done, but we hope that by implementing systemic changes like these, we can create a culture of fairness, transparency and build trust and credibility with Black employees.”**

— **Jenny O’Donnell**, Chief Human Resources Officer; co-chair of the Staff Working Group



BELOW: Eboni Morgan, former Black Student Support Facilitator (2023).



# Faculty recommendations

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"I am so **proud** of the work that the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism has undertaken over the last three years. Our **dedicated focus** and the progress on the initial 14 recommendations have furthered the university's commitment to creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for Black students, faculty and staff to prosper and flourish. Through initiatives such as the creation of a Black Scholarship Institute, **deliberate actions** to recruit and hire more Black faculty members and postdoctoral fellows, and by broadening our Black Studies curriculum, we are effecting **long-term change** for our entire community."

— **Roberta Iannacito-Provenzano**  
Provost and Vice-President, Academic and executive chair,  
Faculty Working Group



The Climate Review exposed the personal and professional experiences of anti-Black racism on many Black faculty members. They reported that consequences often include bearing additional emotional labour and scholarly demands due to chronic under-representation in areas such as curriculum development, mentorship and overall

ecosystems of support. The recommendations propose adopting a holistic and cross-cutting approach to increase representation among Black faculty at all levels, establishing pathways for increased knowledge production informed by Black and African worldviews and mobilizing community support.

BELOW: Teshager Kefale and Esa Dube Kerme at the Black Postdoctoral Fellowship Launch (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2023).



### **FACULTY RECOMMENDATION #1:**

**TMU should design and/or enhance programs for recruiting Black faculty members across all its programs. Cluster hires and other group-based recruitment methods should be experimented with so that new Black faculty entering the university have a community that can be clearly identified.**

### **STUDENT RECOMMENDATION #3:**

**Black faculty representation needs to be addressed in programs, departments, schools and faculties.**

### **FACULTY RECOMMENDATION #2:**

**Support and resources to deepen, expand and experiment with new and innovative curriculum in Black Studies in their departments, programs, and fields.**



## What has changed?

Following the publication of the Climate Review, the PICCABR set out to enhance and increase the production and representation of Black scholarship in pedagogy, scholarly research and creative activities, as well as through other innovative initiatives and collaborations within the university and across local and international networks and partnerships.

To achieve this, the Faculty Working Group, in collaboration with the OVPFA and OVPECI, conducted an environmental scan of existing Black studies courses at the university. Following the review, collaborations were established with the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) to expand critical anti-Black racism research and pedagogies across disciplines, and a new anti-Black racism elective course was developed. Additionally, as part of the Faculty Working Group's collaboration with the CELT, funds for a new curriculum enhancement grant to support Black faculty have been secured and a Black Studies Guide has been developed. The guide comprises books, databases, journals, archives, periodicals, films, and carefully curated data to inform researchers on the social, economic political and cultural histories of Black people of African descent in Canada, past and present. It provides an intentional platform to spotlight research and knowledge production by Black scholars.

The PICCABR established a goal to increase the percentage of Black faculty from three per cent to eight per cent of the total tenure-stream faculty at the institution. Recognizing the compounding barriers and intersecting opportunities to improve faculty representation, implementing partners, led by the OVPFA, employed three holistic, cross-cutting and mutually reinforcing strategies:

- broadening recruitment and marketing strategies
- strengthening pathways for prospective Black faculty
- supporting newly hired and existing Black faculty

## In 2022, 21 per cent of all new full-time faculty hires at the university identified as Black, supporting a one per cent increase of Black tenure-stream faculty at TMU since the publication of the Climate Review.

According to the most recent data published in the Diversity Self-ID, the highest representation of Black faculty can be observed in the Faculty of Community Services, the Creative School and the Faculty of Arts.

BELOW: Danielle Taylor at the Alan Shepard Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Awards (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2024).



## Broadening recruitment and marketing strategies

To reduce bias in the hiring process and intentionally attract Black faculty to positions across ranks, programs and disciplines, the Faculty Working Group introduced strategies to broaden approaches to recruitment and marketing. These strategies included incorporating OVPECI's Diversity Self-ID tool into job applications to support a targeted increase of Black faculty, embedding language into job postings that emphasize EDI and explicitly indicating a commitment to recruiting Black faculty, expanding recruitment of Black faculty through existing networks and spaces and establishing department hiring committee equity advocates accompanied by annual training.

## Strengthening pathways for prospective Black faculty

Recognizing that deeply entrenched global systems of inequity disproportionately exclude Black applicants from being eligible to apply for opportunities, the second approach focuses on improving pathways for Black applicants by building the capacities of prospective Black faculty in graduate and postdoctoral programs.

A postdoctoral fellowship program for Black scholars was launched to address under-representation, encouraging Black scholars to build their scholarship, research opportunities and publications through funding and support. In its inaugural year, the initiative received over 50 applications and awarded four fellowships to Black scholars.

**“Building capacities within the university is an important and effective way to help address systemic barriers experienced by Black scholars. This program will help create collegial and professional networks, thereby empowering Black scholars to foster relationships with fellow researchers and faculty, build their intellectual and research capacities and create opportunities that will impact the broader Black community.”**

- **Annette Bailey**, co-chair of the Faculty Working Group

In addition to the postdoctoral fellowship, funding was secured for the establishment of a Black Scholarship Institute (BSI). This initiative will expand Black scholarship across disciplines by mobilizing and encouraging Black-led knowledge production, documentation, publishing and intellectual dialogue, and enhanced research collaboration with communities. An Interim Director of the BSI has been hired.

## Support newly hired and existing Black faculty

Finally, the third strategy aims to support newly hired and existing Black faculty to flourish and succeed in the university setting. Most notably, this strategy, led by the OVPFA with the support of the Black Faculty and Staff Community Network, leverages mentorship and other support to build a strong sense of community and a welcoming environment.

BELOW: PICCABR executive co-chairs and chairs, Black fellows and their supervisors at the launch of the Black Postdoctoral Fellowship (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2023).





Together, these next steps aspire towards a vision of TMU where Black scholars and African-centred knowledge, worldviews and wisdom are valued, embraced and celebrated as essential to academia and social change.



ABOVE: Ahmed Ahmed at the Alan Shepard Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Awards (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2024).

## What is next?

With the hiring of the Interim Director, plans are now underway to establish the BSI. Situated in the Faculty of Community Services, **the BSI will bring together the three Faculty Working Group approaches, providing a sustainable structure for unifying and expanding Black scholarship production and leadership across disciplines, strengthening recruitment and retention of Black scholars, supporting student mentorship in Black scholarship and building research collaboration with communities. The BSI will also seek to develop partnerships with other academic institutions on local, national and global scales and convene forums highlighting African-centred, Black-led and Black-focused research and innovations, with particular consideration for intersectionality.**

In collaboration with the Faculty Working Group and the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Tri-Mentoring Program has introduced a Black Graduate Student Career Mentorship Program to provide mentorship opportunities, supporting Black students in graduate programs to acquire professional skills and career development opportunities.

The OVPFA is also working to build an implementation plan to support Department Hiring Committees in the appropriate and intentional use of the Diversity Self-ID to meet its recruitment, retention and promotion ambitions for Black, Indigenous and racialized communities.

Together, these next steps aspire towards a vision of TMU where Black scholars and African-centred knowledge, worldviews and wisdom are valued, embraced and celebrated as essential to academia and social change.

### ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## BLACK STUDIES IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS

The Faculty of Arts is committed to continuing the decades of work that Black faculty, staff and students have done to anchor and promote Black studies. For examples of more recent initiatives, please refer to the [first-term report](#) from Melanie Knight, Advisor to the Dean of Arts on Blackness and Black Diasporic Education.

### ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## DIMENSIONS PROGRAM

The two-year Dimensions pilot aimed to promote equitable outcomes, remove barriers to the full participation of equity-deserving groups, and create transformational change within the research cultures and ecosystems of post-secondary institutions. Supported by all three federal research granting agencies, the initiative builds on the Government of Canada's Dimensions Charter and seeks to improve EDI in scholarly, research and creative (SRC) activities.

The Dimensions program's objectives include:

- improving equitable access to funding opportunities
- improving research outcomes for members of equity-deserving groups
- fostering research cultures that prioritize inclusive excellence
- embedding EDI considerations into all stages of the research process

TMU was one of 17 post-secondary institutions invited to participate in the Dimensions pilot. During the two-year pilot period, TMU's Dimensions work was led by the Dimensions team, which comprised the Dimensions director and faculty leads (formerly Dimensions faculty chairs) representing each of the faculties and the TMU Libraries. The program falls directly under the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation and the Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion.

During the pilot, the Dimensions team launched a series of consultation activities to help identify the EDI-in-SRC barriers experienced by community members. It facilitated structural and other kinds of change that improved research cultures and practices across the university. Responding to the SRC experiences of Black faculty, postdoctoral fellows and graduate and undergraduate students was a key priority during the pilot. Dimension's work has leveraged the Climate Review and Review of Recommendations Report to ensure alignment with university priorities and responsiveness to the expressed experiences of Black students and faculty. As such, Dimensions at TMU complements, and at times, intersects with the work being led by the PICCABR to confront anti-Black racism and promote Black flourishing at the university.

During the pilot, the Dimensions faculty leads completed several undertakings and introduced initiatives that addressed anti-Black racism in TMU's research cultures and ecosystems.



## DIMENSIONS PROGRAM EXAMPLES

In addition to initiatives profiled throughout this report, the following are a select few examples of many of the key efforts to confront anti-Black racism in SRC activities undertaken by the Dimensions team:

- **Research and literature reviews:** The Faculty of Community Services reviewed the Climate Review and similar documents from other institutions, which then became the basis for events and discussions in the faculty, particularly as regards community-engaged research. In addition to a literature review, YSGPS completed an environmental scan and review of holistic admission practices. The Faculty of Arts undertook a literature review of how community-engaged SRC activities, particularly those undertaken by Black and Indigenous faculty, are perceived, evaluated, and rewarded in academia. In 2020, the Librarians completed an equity and community inclusion environmental scan to aid the work of its strategic planning committee.
- **EDI audits:** Using the 2019 Student Diversity Self-ID data, the Faculty of Science graded its programs based on the representativeness of its student population against the broader community. This evaluation helped identify and address gaps and increase accountability in the recruitment of Black students across programs.
- **Events, training and workshops:** Dimensions hosted several town hall events in each Faculty as well as in the Libraries. The Libraries' event utilized live-action simulation to explore the EDI gaps that affect the research prospects and undertakings of early-career BIPOC librarians. The Libraries also held Black History Wikipedia events in 2021, 2022, and 2023 and produced a Black Studies LibGuide.

Additionally, the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science Dimensions team hosted a workshop for BIPOC students in April 2023 to raise awareness of EDI barriers and better understand the experience of Black and Indigenous students in research.

Feedback obtained from this workshop will guide future engagement with members of the faculty's Black student community and inform resource documents for faculty seeking to better support Black-identified students within their research teams. Also, the Faculty of Arts Dimensions team, in collaboration with the associate dean, Research and Graduate Studies and the Black Student Success Facilitator, held the first of a series of workshops for Black-identified graduate students in the faculty. The inaugural session allowed students to identify specific barriers they faced and receive personalized support throughout the remainder of the academic year that helped them achieve specific goals.

- **Resource development:** The Faculty of Sciences' Best Practices in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) series provides resources and guidance to promote EDIA outcomes in scholarly, research and creative activities. For example, the Code of Conduct and Expectations and the Inclusive Hiring and Recruitment documents provide faculty members and research staff with knowledge to build more diverse and inclusive research teams and cultures.
- **Awards and funding support:** Key YSGPS initiatives in which Dimensions was involved include launching the Black Graduate Student Awards and the Postdoctoral Fellowships for Black Scholars. In The Creative School, Dimensions enhanced internal funding application processes by making the inclusion of meaningful EDI statements mandatory. In the Faculty of Arts, Dimensions collaborated with the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, to prepare EDI guidelines to support research and teaching grants.

- **Communities of Practice:** Dimensions supported the development of Communities of Practice within all faculties and the Libraries. These communities foster collaboration and knowledge sharing on EDI in SRC and facilitate a variety of forums that aim to create more equitable environments and outcomes for researchers.
- **Monitoring, evaluation and reporting:** Dimensions published reports documenting key findings, recommendations and initiatives to confront anti-Black racism and promote more equitable outcomes in scholarly, research and creative activities across faculties. Notable outputs include reports from the [Faculty of Community Service](#), [Faculty of Arts](#), [Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#), [Creative School Faculty](#), [Faculty of Science](#), [Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Sciences](#) and [Ted Rogers School of Management](#). Additionally, the YSGPS completed a [report](#) including an environmental scan and review of holistic admission review practices in 2022 and held two campus-wide events focused on holistic admissions review.

The Dimensions Program is the first of its kind in Canada. It is modelled after similar programs such as Athena SWAN in the United Kingdom and Ireland, SAGE in Australia, and SEA Change in the United States.

In March 2023, Dimensions at TMU received Stage 2 Construction Recognition from the federal government for its efforts to strategically integrate equity, diversity and inclusion within SRC cultures and ecosystems across the university and remove barriers to inclusive research, especially for members of equity-deserving groups. Dimensions at TMU is transitioning from the pilot to the construction stage. EDI priorities over the five years of the construction stage will continue to include actions to improve the SRC experience and outcomes for Black community members at TMU.

## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE'S BLACK HEALTH LEAD

The Black Health Lead is a new role established and filled, with the support of the OVPECI, to promote Black flourishing in all facets of the School of Medicine. This inaugural role is positioned within the senior leadership team and executive committee and will provide direction from a lens to confront anti-Black racism across the new school.

The newly hired Black Health Lead will begin developing a long-term strategy, identifying the next steps to develop curriculum focused on Black health, establishing a Black learners admission stream and strengthening the relationship between the School of Medicine and Black communities and relevant, Black-focused organizations.

## ANTI-BLACK RACISM CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Faculty of Community Services' Anti-Black Racism Curriculum Development Fund was established in 2021 to support curriculum redesign that is more inclusive of critical Black scholarship and Black studies, drawing particularly on current Black Canadian scholarship.

The Fund supported 11 projects totalling \$45,000 during its inaugural year and seven projects totalling \$35,000 during its second year. These projects ranged from efforts to infuse an anti-Black racism lens into midwifery, nursing, social work and early childhood creative arts curriculum to creating digital stories on Black urbanism and planning in Canada and offering a speaker series on Black disability.



ABOVE: Lia Douglas and Donna Young at TMU's Black Excellence Graduation (2023).

### **FACULTY RECOMMENDATION #3:**

**Contract lecturers, especially long-term ones, should be made aware of the differences between CUPE and the TFA. TMU should work with contract academic staff to provide them with the tools and resources to apply for tenure-track positions. This program should have clear and transparent guidelines for application.**

Conversations with CUPE 3904 were initiated and will resume in the coming semesters. The Faculty Working Group remains committed to continuing to work with CUPE 3904 to identify the most appropriate next steps to address this recommendation.

BELOW: Annette Bailey at the Alan Shepard Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Awards (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2024).



### **FACULTY RECOMMENDATION #4:**

**Contract faculty should be given a clear sense of how and why their contracts are not renewed.\***

\*This recommendation falls outside the purview of the PICCABR. However, Faculty Recommendation #3, which sets out to enable more opportunities for discussion among CUPE lecturers at the university, will help address this.

#### **ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS**

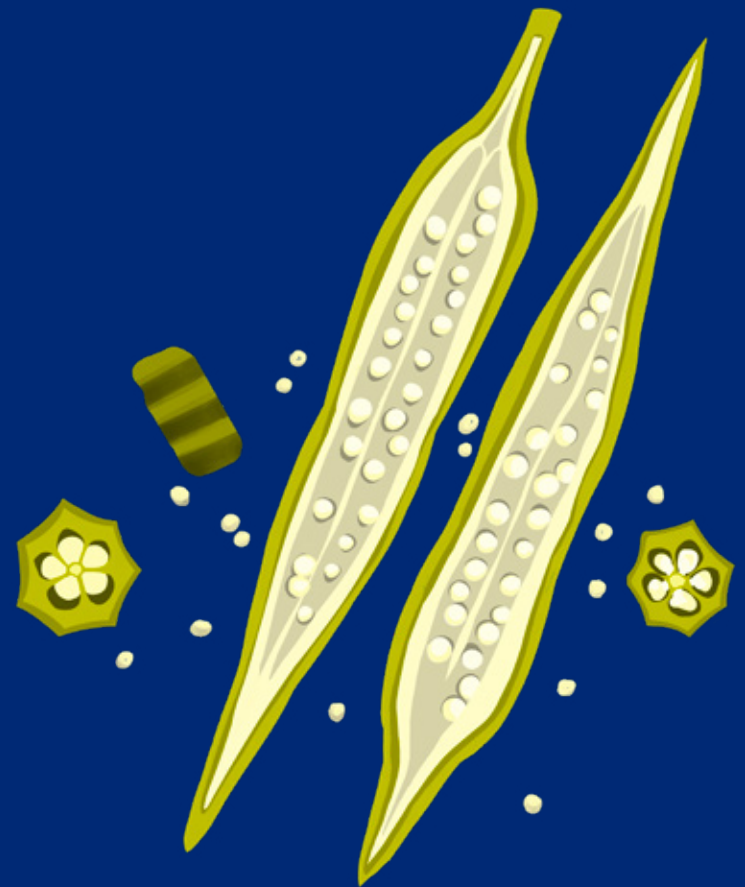
### **BLACK AND EDI-CENTRED FACULTY COMMITTEES AND GROUPS ACROSS CAMPUS**

- The Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Science and TMU Libraries established communities of practice with the support of Dimensions.
- The Faculty of Community Services launched departmental and university-wide EDI committees, which have led events and school-based initiatives focused on confronting anti-Black racism.
- The Department of Architectural Science introduced an EDI Task Force to investigate anti-Black racism and barriers to inclusion.



# Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion recommendation

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## OVPECI RECOMMENDATION:

The university should engage in a campaign that clarifies the mandate of OVPECI and the work it is intended to do on campus, distinguishing it from other units, specifically the Human Resources unit.

### ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

## COURSE DEVELOPMENT INFORMED BY PRACTICES OF EQUITY, ANTI-RACISM AND DECOLONIZATION

The Special Advisor to the President on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID) Curriculum Transformation has been discussing with faculty, staff and students to encourage course content building informed by practices of equity, anti-racism and decolonization across degree requirements. The Special Advisor EDID serves as a liaison to support faculty in discussions that guide the curriculum transformation strategy, helping to enable them to make decisions regarding the creation of mandatory equity content across disciplines in a systemic and long-lasting way.

BELOW: Marcelle Mullings speaking at OVPECI's Soup and Substance panel (2023).



While meaningful institutional change requires whole-university approaches and participation, it also requires an intentional and ongoing effort responsive to a continually evolving world and informed by lived experience, good practice and subject matter expertise. The OVPECI works to create an enabling and supportive environment for transformational change at the university. From consulting across teams and enhancing accountability to providing expertise, reviewing policies, delivering training, organizing events and offering critical resources, the OVPECI has collaborated with cross-campus partners to support the implementation of every recommendation included in the Climate Review.

The OVPECI's publication of the Climate Review in 2020 represented one milestone alongside a decorated history of the office's work in championing equity and community inclusion. The OVPECI was initially formed in response to an examination of systemic racism at TMU conducted by the University's Taskforce on Anti-Racism in 2010. The study, which reported on the prevalence of systemic racism and structural barriers at the institution, culminated in a recommendation to create an office dedicated to promoting EDI at the university. As such, community-activated commitment to equity lies at the core of the OVPECI's fabric, uniquely positioned to house the implementation of the Climate Review recommendations and support teams across the university in fostering an equitable and intentionally inclusive campus.

While meaningful institutional change requires whole-university approaches and participation, it also requires an intentional and ongoing effort responsive to a continually evolving world and informed by lived experience, good practice and subject matter expertise.

### What has changed?

Since the launch of the Climate Review, the OVPECI has consulted and collaborated with cross-campus partners to support the implementation of all 14 recommendations. The OVPECI has introduced, sustained and expanded a range of cross-cutting measures to drive the university's work to confront anti-Black racism across five areas of work:

- partnerships and collaboration
- education and awareness
- public engagement and communications
- research and policy and
- governance and leadership

### What's next?

With Tanya De Mello assuming the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion role on January 1, 2023, the OVPECI has developed and initiated a strategy to implement and articulate progress on recommendation 14.

Planning will begin with the development of a university-wide EDI strategic plan that will provide a roadmap for the university's strategic direction in terms of EDI and refine OVPECI's mandate and jurisdiction. The OVPECI has initiated the preliminary stages of developing a university-wide EDI strategic plan through a listening tour with senior administrators and leaders on campus.

BELOW: Suzette Vidale playing steel pan at the Viola Desmond Awards (2023).





## EXPANDING TMU'S EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS TO INCLUDE BLACK PEOPLES

In 2022, the Research, Planning and Assessment unit in the OVPECI expanded the scope of the university's equity-deserving groups. Where TMU previously recognized five equity-deserving groups, including Indigenous Peoples, racialized peoples, persons with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ peoples and women, the university has now added Black peoples as a distinct group. In other words, university reports and the data available online will now explicitly include disaggregated data on Black students, faculty and staff.

BELOW: Crystal Mark and Marsha Brown at the Viola Desmond Awards (2023).







ABOVE: Lesley Waldron performing with the AdinkraFarm Ensemble at the launch of the Black Postdoctoral Fellowship (Alyssa K. Faoro, 2023).

## HUMAN RIGHTS- FOCUSED TRAINING ON ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Human Rights Services provides individual and group training on anti-Black racism to resolve complaints received under the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy.

## BLACK AND EDI-CENTRED STAFF COMMITTEES AND GROUPS ACROSS CAMPUS

Several networks, committees and groups have existed recently emerged across the university to bring Black stakeholders together around shared experience and goals:

- The Black Faculty and Staff Community Network brings Black faculty and staff together to celebrate Black excellence in all its many forms at TMU. It remains committed to fostering a community of mutual support at the university and offers opportunities for personal and professional development, mentorship and social engagement.
- The Black Excellence Committee organizes events and creates opportunities for Black students, faculty and staff to authentically share space throughout the year. The committee is a collaboration between OVPECI, the Tri-Mentoring Program led by the OVPS, the Talent Management Centre of Expertise in Human Resources and Magnet..
- The TRSM Anti-Black Racism Awareness Committee established four working subcommittees focusing on community engagement and awareness, audit and evaluation, education and training, scholarship, and bursary.
- The TMU Belong Committee is a group of student-athletes, coaches, staff and external stakeholders within Athletics and Recreation, providing counsel and guidance to support strategy and operations from an EDI lens. They also work to create alternative pathways for community members to raise concerns and issues.

## DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING THROUGH THE DIVERSITY SELF-ID PROGRAMS

The employee and student [Diversity Self-ID programs](#), led by the Research, Planning and Assessment unit of the OVPECI, collect, analyze and report self-identification data at the university. They enable the community to identify patterns and trends to know where progress is being made and where the university is falling short of attracting and retaining talent in the broader community.

The program involves the collection, analysis and reporting of data on the representation, recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff from TMU's six equity-deserving groups, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples, Black people, persons with disabilities, racialized people, 2SLGBTQ+ people and women.

The addition of Black people as a distinct equity-deserving group recognized by the university was made in 2022. Now, all reports, presentations and tools that include Diversity Self-ID data include data explicitly on the experiences of Black students, faculty and staff at TMU.

Together with other information, the data is used as a tool across teams to make informed decisions that respond to issues of representation, inclusion and accessibility. In addition to the publicly available data, reports and expert advice on using data are provided to leaders and teams across the campus to inform plans and decision making and measure progress.

Making data available makes visible issues impacting community members from equity groups at TMU. The Diversity Self-ID programs help enable positive change at the university and beyond.



# Closing letter from the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion, Tanya De Mello

The effort of redressing centuries of systemic racism can be challenging, slow-moving and, at times, feel discouraging. I came to work at TMU because of the university's reputation and evidence of its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as the specific focus I saw in recruiting and retaining Black and Indigenous students, faculty and staff. So much work has been done in this university to increase the sense of belonging of Black community members on this campus. Yet, three years following the release of Climate Review, many of the inequitable outcomes that necessitated the launch of this initiative persist.

As the Vice-President of Equity and Community Inclusion, I feel responsible for ensuring that the concern for fostering an equitable future is not just a trend but a collective and sustained priority. Anti-Black racism is not a singular problem and, therefore, will not be combatted with any one intervention. It requires a deliberate, concerted and sustained approach that seeks to replace anti-Black racism within our systems with inclusive excellence, belonging and a commitment to Black flourishing adopted by all. Our office collaborates and supports the work to increase Black flourishing across the campus, recognizing that this work is a shared responsibility that must go beyond the OVPECI.

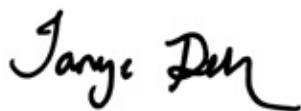
The Cultivating Black Flourishing Report acknowledges the critical efforts to respond to Black student, staff and faculty experiences across the university while recognizing that there is still much more to be done.

I have been moved by how the university has mobilized around and beyond the recommendations outlined in the Climate Review. I feel encouraged to see senior leaders and my peers meaningfully committing to confronting anti-Black racism by investing in resources, critically reviewing practices and processes, participating in training and championing this work across their teams.

I would like to acknowledge the critical contributions of my fellow members on the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

The implementation of each recommendation from the review would not have been possible without the efforts of the PICCABR and its partners, as well as institutional buy-in, participation of senior leadership, resource allocation, opportunities for capacity-building and engagement with the community.

Thank you for committing to the journey of confronting anti-Black racism and fostering Black flourishing at our university.



**Tanya De Mello**  
Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion  
and executive chair, Student Working Group

- **Executive Co-Chairs:**  
Roberta Iannacito-Provenzano (Faculty Working Group executive chair), Saeed Zolfaghari (Staff Working Group executive chair), Tanya De Mello (Student Working Group executive chair).
- **The Student Working Group:**  
Jen McMillen (co-chair), Ahmed Ahmed, Nadya Burton, Lance Campbell, Shurla Charles-Forbes, Beverly-Jean Daniel, Jen Gonzales, Sean Kheraj and Eboni Morgan.
- **The Faculty Working Group:**  
Patrizia Albanese (co-chair), Annette Bailey (co-chair), Sara Berman, Davina Chan, Donatus Oguamanam, Nancy Pham and Pamela Sugiman.
- **Staff Working Group:**  
Jenny O'Donnell (co-chair), Blessing Asagwara, Sarah Bukhari, Gregory John, Braden Johnson, Sharmaine McKenzie, Krishan Mehta, Stacey Merkoulou, Gladys Ndungu and Pauline Scipio.
- **The PICCABR Project Team:**  
Grace-Camille Munroe (project manager), Mary Ola and Tiyahna Ridley-Padmore.
- **The Black Student Advisory Committee:** Aisha Abawajy, Naomi Addai, Toluwani Adeniyi, Kwasi Adu-Poku, Diana Adu-Yeboah, Nicole Agyenim-Boateng, Sophia Anazia, Ezekiel Asafo-Adjei, Trevohn Baker, Cheo Bannis, Mariam Barrow, Jama Bin-Edward, Jeremiah Bowers, Tahja Burnett-FFrench, Zanele Chisholm, Ceyrina Craig, Haben Dawit, Dave D'Oyen, Darlyn Edada, Sanyu Galabuzi-Kassam, Joy Grant-Khan, Ty Hamilton, Chantel Jeremiah, Rianna Jones, Anwar (Àjé) Knight, Natasha Larmond, Maya Leatham, Nathalia Lewis, Danielle Licorish, Daysha Loppie, Hana Salih Makawi, Shaniqua Mayers, Kenya Murray, Linda Musui, Nigeleen Nwakobi, Victor Ola-Matthew, Segun-Adebowale Oluwatomisin, Amanda Offor, Hilda Oni, Michelle Owala, Ashley Patrick, Rahim Perez-Anderson, Jenaiya Pinney, Victoria Ross, Kamau Simba, Zorian Smith, Edmund Sofu, Dominic Stewart, Nardos Tedros and Lauren Jade Young.

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**“Meaningful change requires commitment, bold leadership, institutional investment and collective effort... Remaining steadfast in our commitment is a responsibility we must uphold for our students, faculty, staff and alumni — now and in the future.”**

— Mohamed Lachemi  
President and Vice-Chancellor, Toronto Metropolitan University



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## Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism

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