University Students' Council Standing Policy
Racial and Religious Students' Policy Paper

Legislative History
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This paper contains the discussion of topics such as racism and religious discrimination. Found below are resources available for students on campus:

Equity and Human Rights Services: Information, Education & Support
equity@uwo.ca - 519-661-2111 ext. 83334

Health & Wellness - Counselling Services
UCC, rm. 11 - 519-661-3030

Student Support and Case Management - Support, Education & Coordination of Resources
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USC Ethnocultural Support Services - ethnocultural@westernusc.ca

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Land Acknowledgement

The University of Western Ontario is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have long-standing relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western University values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

To learn more about these Indigenous communities and how you can best be an ally, please refer to the London & Middlesex Indigenous Culture Card. For more information about land acknowledgements, please refer to the article "Rethinking the Practice and Performance of Indigenous Land Acknowledgment" by Robinson et al. A land acknowledgement is an important step in recognizing colonial history but should by no means be the full extent to which we acknowledge and support indigenous communities.

Key Terms

The following definitions are from the OUSA paper on Addressing Racism & Religious Discrimination.[1]

Anti-racism: "Anti-racism is about taking proactive steps to fight racial inequity. It's different from other approaches that focus on multiculturalism or diversity because it acknowledges that systemic racism exists and actively confronts the unequal power dynamic between groups and the structures that sustain it. Anti-racism involves consistently assessing structures, policies and programs, and through monitoring outcomes, ensuring they are fair and equitable for everyone."

Black, Indigenous, and People(s) of Colour (BIPOC): Black, Indigenous, and People(s) of Colour (BIPOC): Black, Indigenous, and People(s) of Colour is one of the preferred terms used to describe people collectively. It is used by some to be inclusive and account for the erasure of Black and Indigenous people and their unique experiences of colonization and slavery. Throughout this paper, both "Black, Indigenous, and People(s) of Colour" and person" or "racialized group" are used when it is necessary to describe people collectively, recognizing that some students may not identify with one term, but may identify with the other.

Creed: "Creed is interpreted to mean "religious creed" or "religion." It is defined as a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship. A belief in a God or gods, or a single supreme being or deity is not a requisite. Religion is broadly accepted by the OHRC to include, for example, non-theistic bodies of faith, such as the spiritual faiths/practices of [Indigenous] cultures, as well as bona fide newer religions (assessed on a case by case basis). The existence of religious beliefs and practices are both necessary and sufficient to the meaning of creed, if the beliefs and practices are sincerely held and/or observed."

Cultural Competency: "Cultural Competency is the ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds and religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the cultural differences and similarities and the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each."[2]

Decolonization: "Decolonization itself refers to the undoing of colonial rule over subordinate countries but has taken on a wider meaning as the 'freeing of minds from colonial ideology' in particular by addressing the ingrained idea that to be colonised was to be inferior." In the context of academia, it "is often understood as the process in which we rethink, reframe and reconstruct the curricula and research that preserve the Europe-centred, colonial lens. It should not be mistaken for "diversification", as diversity can still exist within this western bias." Decolonization goes further and involves actively resisting and unlearning the dangerous and harmful legacy of colonization, particularly the racist idea that the worldviews and knowledge

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[1] OUSA, "Addressing Racism & Religious Discrimination Policy Paper," OUSA, 2021, https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ousa/pages/2076/attachments/original/1619726684/Addressing_Racism___Religious_Discrimination_2021_document.pdf?1619726684.

[2] Indigenous Primary Health Care Council, "Cultural Competency Guideline for Ontario Public Health Units to Engage Successfully with Aboriginal Communities," 2018, https://www.iphcc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Cultural-Competency-Guideline-Report-June-2018.pdf.

systems of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), are inferior to those of white Europeans.

Equality: "[E]quality means that all segments of society have the same level of support and opportunity. This means that regardless of one's gender, race, sex, religion, etc., opportunities remain the same. It ensures that people in different social statuses or groups will not be discriminated against."

Equity: Equity is a "condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences." "[E]quity refers to the fact that different people have varying needs of support and assistance…The goal of equity is to help achieve fairness in treatment and outcomes."

Intersectionality: "Intersectionality is the way in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers, opportunities, and/or power imbalances. In the context of race and Indigenous identity, this means recognizing the ways in which people's experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one group, may vary depending on the individual's or group's relationship to additional overlapping or intersecting social identities, like religion, ethnic origin, gender, age, disabilities or citizenship and immigration status. An intersectional analysis enables better understanding of the impacts of any one particular systemic barrier by considering how that barrier may be interacting with other related factors."

Prejudice: "Prejudice is a strong dislike or negative feelings held by someone about another person or group; negative attitudes and stereotypes may lead to harassment and discrimination."

Racial discrimination: (as defined in Canadian case law) "[A]ny distinction, conduct or actions, whether intentional or not, but based on a person's race, which has the effect of imposing burdens on an individual or group, not imposed upon others or which withholds or limits access to benefits available to other members of society." Racial discrimination includes, but is not limited to, prejudice, racial profiling, and constructive discrimination.

Racial equity: Racial equity "[r]efers to the systemic fair treatment of all people that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone."

Racial profiling: Racial profiling is "any action undertaken for reasons of safety, security or public protection that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion or place of origin rather than on reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual for greater scrutiny or different treatment."

Racialization: Racialization is "[t]he process of social construction of race…the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life."

Racialized person or group: "Racialized person" or "racialized group" is one of the preferred terms used to describe people collectively – rather than less appropriate terms such as "racial minority," "visible minority," "person of colour" or "non-white" – "as it expresses race as a

social construct rather than as a description based on perceived biological traits. Furthermore, these other terms treat "white" as the norm to which racialized persons are to be compared and have a tendency to group all racialized persons in one category, as if they are all the same." Throughout this paper, both "racialized person" or "racialized group" and "Black, Indigenous, and People(s) of Colour" are used when it is necessary to describe people collectively, recognizing that some students may not identify with one term, but may identify with the other.

Racism: Racism is "an ideology that either explicitly or implicitly asserts that one racialized group is inherently superior to others…Racism oppresses and subordinates people because of racialized characteristics. It has a profound impact on social, economic, political and cultural life… racism exists at a number of levels, in particular (1) individual, (2) institutional or systemic, and (3) societal (also described as cultural/ideological)…At the individual level, racism may be expressed in an overt manner but also through everyday behaviour that involves many small events in the interaction between people. This is often described as "everyday racism" and is often very subtle in nature…At the institutional or systemic level, racism is evident in organizational and government policies, practices, and procedures and "normal ways of doing things" which may directly or indirectly, consciously or unwittingly, promote, sustain, or entrench differential advantage for some people and disadvantage for others…At a societal level, racism is evident in cultural and ideological expressions that underlie and sustain dominant values and beliefs. It is evident in a whole range of concepts, ideas, images and institutions that provide the framework of interpretation and meaning for racialized thought in society."

Religion: "Religion is any religious denomination, group, sect, or other religiously defined community or system of belief and/or spiritual faith practices."

Retraumatization: Retraumatization is "[a] conscious or unconscious reminder of past trauma that results in a re-experiencing of the initial trauma event. It can be triggered by a situation, an attitude or expression, or by certain environments that replicate the dynamics (loss of power/control/safety) of the original trauma."

Stereotypes: Stereotypes are "[q]ualities ascribed to individuals or groups that are based on misconceptions, false generalizations, and/or oversimplifications that potentially result in stigmatization. A race-based stereotype is a quality ascribed to individuals/groups related to race. Stereotypes can perpetuate racism and racial discrimination and give rise to racial inequalities."

Underrepresented Students, Students from Underrepresented Groups: Underrepresented students are students from demographic groups that have a lower percentage of participation in postsecondary education when compared to the percentage of participation in post-secondary of the general population. For the context of this paper, "underrepresented" should be understood only in the context of participation in postsecondary education, not other aspects of society. It is important to note that, while some marginalized populations may be underrepresented within the post-secondary system, the terms "marginalized" and "underrepresented" are not synonymous and are not used interchangeably in this paper. In particular, policy makers often refer to underrepresented groups in post-secondary education as including: those from low-income families; first-generation students, those from rural and northern communities, those from single-parent families, or those with disabilities, among other marginalized populations.

Introduction

The United Nations has reported an increase in racial discrimination, disruption to education and decreased employment opportunities for racialized individuals globally.[3] Additionally, between the years of 2007 and 2017, Pew Research Center found that "social hostilities involving religion – including violence and harassment by private individuals, organizations or groups" has increased .[4] Racial and religious discrimination is also a prevalent issue at universities across Canada, including on Western's campus.

This paper relies on similar principles to OUSA's policy paper entitled *Addressing Racism & Religious Discrimination,* along with McMaster's policy paper entitled *Racial, Cultural and Religious Equity*. Additionally, this paper relies on results from the University Students' Council survey on Religious and Racialized Students released in September 2021.[5] This survey was open to students from July 29th, 2021 to September 1st, 2021 to all undergraduate students at Western. In this paper, the University Students' Council prioritizes a student-driven approach to addressing the systemic and pervasive nature of racism and religious discrimination to help inform the University Students' Council advocacy. To ensure the policy paper is informed by lived experiences and the voices of students, this paper uses the survey results along with a variety of student groups on campus.

The University Students' Council strives to identify areas in which the current systems and resources available for racialized and religious students at Western could be expanded or improved. In this paper, the USC addresses issues related to the experiences of racialized and religious students at Western such as campus culture, representation, race-based data-collection, student supports, academics including faculty and staff along with accessing resources. Moreover, this paper is intended to give comprehensive recommendations that work to help reduce the barriers and discrimination Religious and Racialized students face at Western University.

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[3]United Nations, "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," United Nations (United Nations, 2021), https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day.
[4]Pew Research Center, "How Religious Restrictions Have Risen around the World," Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, May 30, 2020, https://www.pewforum.org/2019/07/15/a-closer-look-at-how-religious-restrictions-have-risen-around-the-world/.
[5]University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results," September 2021.

This paper was developed in consultation with student groups from across Western's campus, and we extend our appreciation to the student leaders from the Black Students' Association, the Muslim Students' Association, the African Students' Association, Western Hillel, the Student EDI Network,[6] USC's Ethnocultural Support Services, USC's 2021/22 Anti-Racism Working Group, USC 2021/22 Equity Advocacy Committee, and more for their contributions and the work they do to create a more safe and inclusive campus.

Recommendations

BUILDING A CAMPUS CULTURE OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Principle: Students' post-secondary education should be free of racism and religious discrimination.

Principle: Post-secondary institutions play a key role in preventing, addressing, and creating an environment free of racism and religious discrimination.

Principle: Western University should commit to developing a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion on campus in order to ensure students, regardless of identity or background, who are willing and able to pursue post-secondary education have the opportunity to do so.

Principle: Students at Western University should see themselves reflected in the makeup of the campus community.

Concern: Racialized students – especially international students, students who are immigrants or children of immigrants, first-generation students, and Indigenous students – may find it more difficult to find peer support networks and role models upon entry to post-secondary education.

Concern: Students who belong to equity-deserving groups experience systemic discrimination on campus.

Concern: Western University does not currently have a long or short-term plan that outlines tangible commitments to EDI-D.

Concern: Western University does not effectively promote the formal training it offers to the student body on anti-racism or allyship.

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[6] Membership can be found on the Student EDI Network can be found here.

> **Recommendation:** Western University should, in consultation with the USC and students on campus, develop a multi-year EDI-D action plan in order to chart the actions they are committed to taking.
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> **Recommendation:** Western University should create a Student Advisory Committee on EDI-D to advise and inform the work of the Office of the AVP EDI-D.
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> **Recommendation:** Western University should review their Non-discrimination/Harassment Policy, last updated in 2017. [7]
>
> **Recommendation:** Western University should better promote the EDI-D training modules offered to the student body and target these promotions specifically to students in residence.[8]
>
> **Recommendation**: Western University should review its recruitment strategies for students in order to reach different communities and build a more diverse student population.

Post-secondary education fosters a community for growth, increased citizen engagement, economic contribution and more.[9] Unfortunately, there are barriers in place for racialized and religious students in accessing and thriving in post-secondary education settings such as microaggressions, racial fetishization, racial stereotyping, slurs, exclusion, and othering. Western plays an important role in making sure the campus is safe for all students; therefore, Western should prioritize creating an environment that embodies the values of equity, diversity and inclusion. In July 2021, the USC asked students to share their experiences at Western regarding racial and religious discrimination in the Religious and Racialized Students survey. 92% of students of colour surveyed agreed that racism is a recurring issue on Western's campus.[10] 50% of students surveyed stated they have observed an act of racism or religious discrimination during their time at Western and 40.67% have experienced racism on campus.[11] These numbers

[7] Western University, "Policy 1.35 - University of Western Ontario," Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (Equity & Human Rights Services, 2017), https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp135.pdf.

[8] Western University, "Programs, Training Sessions & Events," Western University, 2021, https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/equity/programs-training.html.

[9] Jacqueline Stol, Rebecca Houwer, and Sarah Todd, "Bridging Programs: Pathways to Equity in Post-Secondary .." (Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange, 2016), https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/jspui/bitstream/10315/35720/1/YouthREX%20-%20RtP%20-%20Bridging%20Programs%20-%20Pathways%20to%20Equity%20in%20Post-Secondary%20Education.pdf.

[10] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results," September 2021.

[11] Ibid.

indicate that there is significant work to be done to combat race and religion-based discrimination on campus. Students at Western have reported feeling like "a fly in milk": isolated, unsafe, as though they were treated "like a zoo animal who does not deserve to be here".[12] Consultations and the survey also found that students have been asked to provide "factual evidence" that religious discrimination exists, highlighting the double burden that equity-deserving groups are often required to navigate of not only experiencing discrimination, but also having to demonstrate proof of that discrimination to begin with.

While Western has committed to the recommendations produced in the President's Anti-Racism Working Group Final Report, the university does not currently have a long-term plan regarding equity, diversity and inclusion on campus.[13] Long-term planning is essential so that the campus community can evaluate the ongoing efforts at a number of levels (administrative, faculty, staff, etc.). Creating a long-term plan also requires establishing milestones and other metrics to understand both the scope of the problem at different points in time and to track and understand what success looks like in creating a more equitable campus. This has two benefits: first, it ensures Western is able to tell whether progress is being made, and second, it allows Western to be transparent in communicating that progress to the community.

McGill University recently created a five-year strategic plan regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, which outlines how McGill will work to make tangible changes to make students feel safe and comfortable on campus.[14] Additionally, in March 2021, the federal government made 1.2 million dollars available to Ontario universities to increase equity, diversity and inclusion research.[15] This funding has been put in place to help universities overcome systemic barriers along with creating more opportunities for career advancement for underrepresented communities, which demonstrates the need for universities to invest further in this work. "In Towards Western at 150: Western University Strategic Plan, Western commits to creating and funding an EDI-D Strategic Plan for Western.[16] The USC is heartened by this commitment and

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Western University, "President's Anti-Racism Working Group Final Report," May 2020, https://doi.org/https://president.uwo.ca/pdf/arwg-final-report-to-president-shepard-fnl.pdf.

[14] McGill University, "McGill Strategic Edi Plan - McGill University," 2020, https://www.mcgill.ca/equity/files/equity/mcgill_strategic_edi_plan_2020-20251.pdf.

[15] Science and Economic Development Canada Innovation, "Government of Canada Invests to Increase Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research," Canada.ca (Government of Canada, March 12, 2021), https://www.canada.ca/en/innovation-science-economic-development/news/2021/03/government-of-canada-invests-to-increase-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-in-research0.html.

[16] Western University, 2021.

looks forward to working with the university so that this campus is a safer, more inclusive environment for all.

In consultations, students have also reported feeling as though "their needs are not being heard" and that their concerns are "ignored"[17]. Currently, the university has a Student Accessibility Advisory Committee in which students with disabilities along with allies are consulted to create calls to action regarding accessibility on campus.[18] We recommend that Western create a Student Advisory Committee on EDI-D that include the voices of student stakeholders on campus such as representatives of student groups such as the Muslim Students Society, Black Students' Association, Hillel Western, Indigenous Students' Association and more to ensure the equity work on campus reflects the concerns of students. Student voices are vital to the advancing of EDI-D work on campus, and a dedicated Student Advisory Committee will ensure the university is well-positioned to address the systemic discrimination that racialized and religious students experience at Western. This Student Advisory Committee should also include representatives from the USC, including the VP University Affairs and the AVP Peer Programs.

In November 2021, Alan Sheppard reported to the Gazette that they have altered the recruitment strategies which as a result has increased the student enrollment at Western.[19] However, the USC recommends that Western ensure that the recruitment process works to reach students from more diverse communities. In the *President's Anti-Racism Working Group: Final Report*, it is recommended that once race-based data has been collected, they will utilize this data to inform the recruitment strategies for racialized students[20]. Therefore, Western should prioritize an intersectional lens when reviewing its student recruitment strategies. Western should diversify the tools used to recruit students to Western to ensure that Western campus is inclusive. In order

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[17] University Students' Council, "Racialized and Religious Students Consultation Summary", 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/15zAdzNjxa3lGT_PPwMMdqcVWcCpdNRZ1Zvy0BZ9YNlY/edit?usp=sharing.
[18] Western University, "About the Student Accessibility Advisory Committee," Student Accessibility Advisory Committee - Western University, 2021, http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/student_accessibility_advisory_committee/index.html.
[19] Kirat Walia "Western Welcomes Record-Breaking Number of Frosh, Applications Soar," The Gazette • Western University's Student Newspaper, 2021, https://westerngazette.ca/news/western-welcomes-record-breaking-number-of-frosh-applications-soar/article_b4302ed2-40be-11ec-8a8e-bb7c63de4c80.html.
[20]Western University, "President's Anti-Racism Working Group Final Report," May 2020, https://doi.org/https://president.uwo.ca/pdf/arwg-final-report-to-president-shepard-fnl.pdf.

to effectively recruit students, the intersections and interactions between the facets of one's identity must be taken into account in the recruitment strategies.

Once admitted to Western, residence is a significant space where students interact with each other in intensive ways. Residence, positioned to students by the university as "an experience where you'll feel a sense of belonging like you've never felt before," should be a space where students feel safe and comfortable.[21] However, racialized and religious students have reported being called racial slurs, encountering inappropriate or discriminatory symbols, and engaging with environments where there is a general ignorance of different religious and cultural practices. To combat this, Western should require students in residence to complete training modules that address issues and skills relating to anti-oppression, anti-racism, unconscious bias, and allyship. This training must be informed by an intersectional lens to recognize how systems of discrimination interact with one another to produce uniquely challenging experiences for folks who are marginalized along more than one axis of identity.

EQUITY-BASED DATA COLLECTION

Principle: Ethical and equity-based data collection and research is needed to better understand and address racial and religious equity in post-secondary education.

Principle: Data on race, religion, ethnicity, and culture should be collected to monitor systemic discrimination, understand the needs of marginalized groups, and track progress towards substantive equity.

Principle: Any data on race, religion, ethnicity, and culture should be collected in a safe and ethical manner to prevent furthering systemic barriers and/or increasing discrimination.

Concern: Western University does not currently have a long-term strategy for the collection of equity-based data.

Recommendation: Western should commit significant financial resources to hiring a team to carry out long-term equity-based data collection and establish a strategy for the collection of equity-based data beyond the 2021/2022 academic year.

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[21]Western University, "Live Here in First Year," Residence, A Place for Everyone, 2021, https://residence.uwo.ca/about /live_here_in_firstyear/index.html.

> **Recommendation:** Western University should commit to sharing aggregated data with various groups on campus, including faculties and the USC, in order to ensure these groups have the tools needed to address equity gaps.

The collection of equity-based data is essential for long-term EDI-D planning. In March 2021, the federal government made 1.2 million dollars available to Ontario universities to increase equity, diversity and inclusion research.[22] This funding has been put in place to help universities overcome systemic barriers along with creating more opportunities for career advancement for underrepresented communities. Not only does collecting equity-based data allow for a better understanding of the overall student body at Western, but the Ontario Human Rights Commission explains that by collecting equity-based data, it helps to actively identify and verify the barriers and issues faced by the equity-deserving groups.[23] This data helps demonstrate and inform advocacy efforts, increased funding initiatives and can help influence the support of key stakeholders.[24]

While Western is currently undertaking an Equity Census on campus, it is the analysis of that data and the resultant planning that will be foundational to the future of equity work on campus. As equity, diversity and inclusion research can help identify the discrimination faced by members of the campus community, acting proactively in preventing the systemic barriers for equity-deserving groups can help foster an environment of inclusion. The lack of research regarding equity-deserving groups at Western reinforces the absence of support for racialized and religious students.[25] By collecting data, Western will also be able to identify resources needed to support the equity-deserving groups on campus. In consultation with relevant student groups and the University Students' Council, Western should create a long-term data collection plan and framework for future data collection efforts. Western should commit significant financial

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[22] Science and Economic Development Canada Innovation, "Government of Canada Invests to Increase Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research," Canada.ca (Government of Canada, March 12, 2021), https://www.canada.ca/en/innovation-science-economic-development/news/2021/03/government-of-canada-invests-to-increase-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-in-research0.html.

[23] Ontario Human Rights Commission, "3. Collecting Data – Consider the Benefits," 3. Collecting data – consider the benefits | Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2009, http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/count-me-collecting-human-rights-based-data/3-collecting-data-%E2%80%93-consider-benefits.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ontario Human Rights Commission, "2. When Collecting Data Is a Good Idea," 2. When collecting data is a good idea | Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2009, http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/count-me-collecting-human-rights-based-data/2-when-collecting-data-good-idea.

resources to hiring a robust team to carry out this work and establish a plan for the collection of equity-based data beyond the 2021/2022 academic year. Additionally, once data is collected, Western University should share this data with student groups, the USC, faculties and other bodies on campus to inform and support the equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts of these groups.

STUDENT SUPPORTS: MENTAL HEALTH

Principle: A well-supported transition to post-secondary is critical for students to feel confident in their ability to succeed in their post-secondary program.

Principle: Institutional support for racialized students as they transition to post-secondary is necessary to close the post-secondary access gap.

Principle: Facets of a person's identity, such as race, religion, sexuality, gender, class, and disability, are often inextricably linked to the mental health of that person. One cannot fully support a student if these intersections are not taken into account.

Principle: Students should have access to mental health professionals who understand their lived experiences.

Concern: Many racialized students – including international students, students who are immigrants or children of immigrants, first-generation students, and Indigenous students – face significant barriers in accessing mental health services.

Concern: Western mental health professionals and academic counsellors do not participate in EDI-D training on a regular basis.

Concern: The demographics of Western's academic counsellors and mental health professionals are not reflective of the diversity of Western's student population.

Recommendation: All Western counsellors should participate in EDI-D, cultural competency and mental health training on a regular basis.

Recommendation: Western should diversify its team of academic counsellors and mental health professionals wherever possible.

> **Recommendation:** EDI-D knowledge and experience should be discussed in interviews and prioritized throughout the hiring process.
>
> **Recommendation:** Western should create specific mental health resources tailored to the experiences of racialized, international, religious, and LGBTQ2+ students.
>
> **Recommendation:** In the absence of a counsellor with a specific lived experience, Western should create support groups for racialized, international, religious, disabled and/or LGBTQ2+ students.
>
> **Recommendation:** Western should create a centralized online appointment booking system in order to ensure that Western's approach to providing adequate mental health support for students is both comprehensive and systematic.

In February 2021, the USC approved the Mental Health Policy Paper which includes a variety of recommendations for the University to adopt which includes a more in-depth analysis of the mental health resources and practices on campus.[26] Many of the principles, concerns and recommendations listed draw from that paper.

Western's Strategic Plan, *Towards Western at 150*, stated that they have "invested significantly" in the resources on campus that promote the well-being of students such as mental health services on campus.[27] The USC is heartened by this commitment and looks forward to working with the university to ensure that the university recognizes student mental health as both a priority and a substantial concern. A 2019 study by the American College Health Association found that over 50 percent of Canadian university students felt so depressed that it was difficult to function, almost 70 percent felt overwhelming anxiety and about 16 percent had seriously considered suicide in the preceding twelve months. As a result, the mental health of Western students should be a major priority for Western.[28]

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[26] University Students' Council, "University Students' Council Standing Policy Mental Health Policy Paper," University Students' Council, 2021, https://westernusc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210202_Mental-Health-Policy-Paper_V1.pdf.

[27] Western University, "Towards Western at 150 – Western University Strategic Plan," Western University Strategic Planning 2020-2021, 2021, https://president.uwo.ca/strategicplan2021/pdf/Western-Strategic-Report.pdf. . p.12

[28] National College Health Assessment: Canadian Reference Group," American College Health Association, Published 2019, https://www.cacuss.ca/files/Research/NCHA-II%20SPRING%202020 19%20CANADIAN%20REFERENCE%20GROUP%20EXECUTIVE%20SUMMARY.pdf

In order to fully support students at Western, the intersections and interactions between the facets of their identities must be taken into account when providing mental health support. Social determinants of health also influence the mental health of students. These factors include disability, education, food insecurity, gender, housing, race and more.[29] The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) reports that "marginalized groups are more likely to experience poor mental health and in some cases, mental health conditions".[30] In order for students to feel confident in their ability to succeed in their post-secondary program, students must feel as though mental health resources are free from discrimination, socially inclusive and are accessible.[31] When individuals do not feel safe in mental health spaces, the process can result in retraumatization and can be a large setback in the mental health journey of the individual.[32] When accessing mental health support on campus, students have reported that counsellors "do not relate to" or share similar experiences to them and that students, therefore, felt "isolated" and "alone".[33] These responses demonstrate that despite investment in mental health supports, Western has some way to go still in ensuring that those supports meet the needs of all students on campus.

As many issues of identity are sensitive topics, a mistake or misunderstanding can lead a student to lose trust in both the professional they are working with specifically and the service as a whole. Therefore, in order to create an environment and support services that are socially inclusive, Western should not only mandate all mental health counsellors to be regularly trained in EDI-D concepts and practices but should also ensure that mental health counsellors on campus reflect the student body and have shared lived experiences of the racialized and religious students at Western. To ensure students feel safe and understood in the mental health services on campus, Western should diversify its team of counsellors as well as create specific resources tailored to

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[29] Juha Mikkonen and Dennis Raphael, "Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts," 2010, https://www.thecanadianfacts.org/The_Canadian_Facts.pdf.

[30] Canadian Mental Health Association, "Mental Health and Equity," CMHA Ontario, 2021, https://ontario.cmha.ca/equity/.

[31] Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health, "Equity, Diversity & Inclusion: A Toolkit for Postsecondary Campuses," Campus Mental Health Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, 2020, https://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CICMH-Equity-Diversity-Inclusion-Toolkit-EN.pdf.

[32] Laurel Nowak, "How to Avoid Retraumatization in Therapy: The Benefits of Inpatient Treatment," BrightQuest Treatment Centers (BrightQuest Treatment Centers, June 19, 2019), https://www.brightquest.com/blog/how-to-avoid-retraumatization-in-therapy-the-benefits-of-inpatient-treatment/.

[33] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results,"

reflect the varying lived experiences of racialized and religious students. This should include creating a short-term plan with students who are unable to find resources tailored to their needs, which will help ensure all students are able to access resources when needed, along with the creation of more support groups. Though these short-term measures are important to enact from a harm-reduction perspective, in order to provide a better long-term quality of care for students who are members of equity-deserving groups, Western must prioritize the hiring of counsellors with more diverse lived experiences.

STUDENT SUPPORTS: RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

Principle: Post-secondary institutions have a duty to accommodate students' religious and cultural beliefs and practices to the point of undue hardship as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Principle: Students of diverse faiths and cultures should not face barriers to their academic and student life as a result of a lack of institutional support or understanding.

Principle: Students should be supported by faculty, instructors, and staff when accessing accommodations, and students should not face negative academic consequences for observing religious and cultural practices.

Principle: The process for seeking and receiving accommodations for the observation of religious and cultural practices should be clear and accessible to all students.

Principle: Acceptance and promotion of diverse faiths and cultures is beneficial to all students in a postsecondary institution.

Concern: There is a lack of institutional clarity, support, and enforcement of the duty to accommodate, which creates inconsistency in access to accommodations for religious and cultural practices.

Concern: Students may feel uncomfortable or targeted on campus due to the observation of religious and cultural practices.

Concern: There is a lack of multi-faith prayer spaces available on campus for students.

Concern: There is a lack of prayer spaces available on campus specifically for Muslim students at Western.

Concern: Muslim students do not have access to religious supports through Chaplaincy at Western.

Concern: Students who identify as religious minorities and require accommodations for the observation of recurring religious and cultural practices or holidays need to resubmit individual accommodation requests, creating an additional barrier for religious students to practice their faith.

Recommendation: The university should modify the existing system for requesting accommodations to allow students who require recurring accommodations, for religious or cultural practices and holidays, to submit one request rather than seek an individual accommodation each time.

Recommendation: The university should allocate additional space on campus for non-denominational prayer.

Recommendation: The university should allocate additional space on campus for Muslim students to practice their faith.

Recommendation: The university should prioritize the hiring of support staff through Chaplaincy services to act as on-campus support for Muslim students.

Recommendation: The university should allocate funding to ensure that Chaplaincy services are well-staffed and accessible for students.

Recommendation: The university should update its Chaplaincy services website to ensure up-to-date contact information and available supports are clearly communicated to students.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms under Section 2(a), protects citizens' freedom of conscience and religion which protects citizens' right to practice their religion.[34] Under the Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Creed of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, it explains that "employers, unions, housing providers and service providers have a legal duty to accommodate people's sincerely held creed beliefs and practices to the point of undue hardship,

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[34]Department of Justice Government of Canada, "Section 2(a) – Freedom of Religion," Charterpedia, September 1, 2021, https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/check/art2a.html.

where these have been adversely affected by a requirement, rule or standard".[35] The Ontario Human Rights Commissions continues to explain that "education providers are responsible for accommodating creed-related needs to the point of *undue* hardship."[36]

An additional barrier religious students face are the challenges associated with continually requesting accommodations for holidays that occur each year. Religious students require accommodations for the observation of recurring practices or holidays, and the requirement of students to continually resubmit individual accommodation requests creates an additional barrier for religious students to practice their faith. In consultations with Hillel Western, students reported that there is a lack of awareness on campus by faculty and staff of the various religious holidays and scheduling exams, which means that students often struggle to get accommodations[37]. Students in consultations also reported professors not being willing to make religious accommodations due to their being "not enough" students in need of the accommodations[38]. To alleviate this pressure and more proactively support students who belong to religious communities, Western should create a system that processes accommodations that recur for religious reasons throughout the student's time at Western in order to reduce the barriers students face to practice their faith.

In the Racialized and Religious students survey, students identified a "lack of prayer spaces" as a form of racial and religious discrimination on campus.[39] Additionally, in consultation with various student groups, students have reported having to go to "dirty stairwells" to pray. A student consulted explained that for many when praying, "the stance itself is a vulnerable one that is not comfortable to do in public". Students in consultation explained that increased access to prayer spaces on campus will make students "feel comfortable, safe and accepted in the community." Multi-faith prayer spaces are a space for students to practice their religion and worship in a safe and private space that is separate from the common areas on

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[35] Ontario Human Rights Commision, "9. The Duty to Accommodate," Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Creed, 2015,
http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed/9-duty-accommodate.

[36] Ontario Human Rights Commision, "Policy Statement on Religious Accommodation in Schools," Policy statement on religious accommodation in schools | Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2017,
http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-statement-religious-accommodation-schools.

[37] University Students' Council, "Racialized and Religious Students Consultation Summary", 2021,
https://docs.google.com/document/d/15zAdzNjxa3lGT_PPwMMdqcVWcCpdNRZ1Zvy0BZ9YNlY/edit?usp=sharing.

[38] Ibid.

[39] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results," p.28

campus. It is a quiet place for prayer, meditation and more. [40] All three Western affiliates - Brescia University College, Huron University College, and King's University College - have a Chapel, along with other prayer spaces available such as Muslim prayer spaces available for students.[41] The University of Toronto, at the St.George Campus, has a Multi-Faith Centre where students can worship in various multi-faith spaces as well as learn from others through "interfaith dialogue, arts and social justice".[42] In addition to the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Toronto, there are five other prayer spaces available across the campuses for students to use.[43] However, currently, Western University does not offer a multi-faith prayer space on campus. In the absence of these safe spaces for religious students on campus, the USC has taken action to create a new multi-faith prayer space in the UCC; however, our organization believes firmly that it is the responsibility of the university to create spaces like these in order to reduce barriers to education for religious students and enact their commitment to "creating a more welcoming and inclusive experience".[44] With that in mind, Western should increase the number of multi-faith prayer spaces on campus to help ensure students have access to safe and private prayer spaces when needed. Western should additionally increase the number of Muslim prayer spaces on campus to help reduce the barriers Muslim students face when practicing their faith on campus.

Additionally, Chaplaincy services are available on campuses across Canada. Chaplains are appointed to University communities to represent the religious beliefs and "address spiritual, religious, faith, and ethical needs" of students on campus.[45] Western currently offers Chaplaincy services, however through consultations, students reported that some of the email addresses of Chaplains listed on the website are invalid and the information out of date. Additionally, students have shared in consultations that the Chaplaincy services are weak and require more staff to

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[40]Wilfrid Laurier University, "Wellness and Multi-Faith Support," Wilfrid Laurier University, 2021, https://students.wlu.ca/student-life/diversity-and-equity/multi-faith-support.html.

[41] Brescia University College, "Living Faith," Living Faith - Brescia University College, 2021, https://brescia.uwo.ca/campus_ministry/living_faith/index.php.; King's University College, "Sacred Spaces on Campus," King's University College, 2021, https://www.kings.uwo.ca/campus-ministry/sacred-spaces-on-campus/sacred-spaces-on-campus/.; Huron at Western , "Chapel," Huron University, July 20, 2021, https://huronuc.ca/student-life/chapel/.

[42] University of Toronto, "Multi-Faith Centre for Spiritual Study & Practice," UofT Student Life, September 21, 2021, https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/multi-faith-centre-for-spiritual-study-practice/.

[43] University of Toronto, "Find Worship Space on Campus," UofT Student Life, September 21, 2021, https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/find-worship-space-on-campus/.

[44] Western University, "Towards Western at 150 – Western University Strategic Plan," Western University p.4 orp. 16

[45]Western University, "Chaplaincy at Western," Western Chaplains - Western University, 2021, https://chaplain.uwo.ca/chaplaincy_at_western.html.

support students.[46] Therefore, Western should provide additional funding to ensure that the Chaplaincy service is accessible to students on campus and is constantly updated with new resources and information. There is currently also no religious support staff to act as on-campus support for Muslim students. on campus.[47] To better support Muslim students on campus, Western should work with the Muslim Student Association to hire a Chaplain and *iman* or other relevant support staff for Muslim students to access on campus.

STUDENT SUPPORT: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND CAREER SUPPORTS

Principle: All students, irrespective of identity, background, and financial ability, should be able to access and pursue EL opportunities.

Principle: All students, irrespective of identity, background, and financial ability, should have access to professional development and networking opportunities.

Concern: Racialized students are disproportionately affected by financial instability and hiring-process discrimination.

Concern: Every country has unspoken etiquette rules with regards to job interviews and professional interaction, etiquette rules to which international students may not have been exposed.

Recommendation: Western University should allocate funds toward a targeted program for racialized and international students to support their ability to access experiential learning opportunities.

Recommendation: Western University should allocate funding towards work-readiness programming for international students interested in pursuing WIL opportunities.

Recommendation: Western University should invest in the building of new alumni networks with members of equity-deserving groups.

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[46] University Students' Council, "Racialized and Religious Students Consultation Summary", 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/15zAdzNjxa3lGT_PPwMMdqcVWcCpdNRZ1Zvy0BZ9YNlY/edit?usp=sharing.

[47] Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, "Islamic Chaplaincy Resources," Islamic Chaplaincy Resources | Hartford International University, 2021, https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/interreligious-peace-studies-programs/degree-programs/ma-chaplaincy/islamic-chaplaincy-pathway/islamic-chaplaincy-resources#:~:text=A%20chaplain%20is%20a%20professional,hospital%2C%20prison%20or%20military%20unit.&text=Thus%2C%20a%20Muslim%20chaplain%20is,may%20work%20as%20a%20chaplain.

> **Recommendation:** Western University should prioritize relationship-building with existing alumni who have interest or expertise in EDI-D work.

In February 2021, the USC approved the Experiential Learning Policy Paper which includes a variety of recommendations for the University to adopt which includes a more in-depth analysis of the experiential learning and work-study programs on campus.[48] Many of the principles, concerns and recommendations listed above are drawn from this paper. International and racialized students face specific barriers to participating in experiential learning opportunities not experienced by their White-coded, Canadian peers.
For example, the standards of professionalism that are used to judge an applicant in an interview setting are often connected to white supremacy. This includes expectations of white-coded behaviours and attitudes; standards of hair, clothing and communication patterns; and overall expectations of adhering to an organization's "culture fit".[49] When combined with the reality that BIPOC folks are consistently underrepresented in senior leadership positions, it is clear that international and racialized students need specialized supports that address their particular needs.

As the Experiential Learning Policy Paper articulates, Western should invest in programs that specifically target racialized and international students to provide work-readiness training along with support in accessing opportunities. This can include ensuring that Western allocates funding towards creating a network of racialized alumni and other members of equity-deserving groups in the workforce. This will help foster relationships with students and provide opportunities for racialized and religious students to pursue experiential learning opportunities in which they feel understood and reflected in positions of leadership. In addition, Western should celebrate the accomplishments of alumni who are members of equity-deserving groups on campus as well as on social media platforms in order to ensure these relationships are visible for students.

STUDENT SUPPORTS: SECURITY SERVICES

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[48] University Students' Council, "University Students' Council Standing Policy Experiential Learning Policy Paper," University Students' Council, 2021, https://westernusc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210202_Experiential-Learning-Policy-Paper_V1.pdf.
[49] Ibid.

Principle: All students should be able to work and move on campus without being unfairly questioned.

Principle: All students should feel safe and satisfied in any interaction with security and Special Constable Services on campus.

Concern: Many racialized groups have fraught histories and relationships with law enforcement bodies.

Concern: There is a lack of transparency about the training Special Constable Services receives, and Special Constable Services do not receive EDI-D training on a regular basis.

Concern: A lack of comprehensive allyship, anti-racism, and anti-oppression training can result in harmful outcomes for students of colour.

Recommendation: All Western Special Constables should participate in EDI-D and cultural competency training on a regular basis.

Recommendation: Western should diversify its team of Special Constables wherever possible. Additionally, EDI-D knowledge should be prioritized throughout the hiring process.

All students should feel safe on campus and in the campus community; however, this is not a reality for many students. In the USC Racialized and Religious survey, 40% of students reported racial discrimination as a prominent issue at Western. Additionally, 41% of students surveyed "strongly agreed" that they feel safe on campus.[50] The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has expressed concerns regarding racial profiling on campus. The OHRC stated that students have reported being "inappropriately stopped and questioned by police, either in school or on university campus by campus security."[51] The impacts of racial profiling can have a profound influence on individuals, impacting "their sense of being safe and secure, their liberty, their connection with their families and communities, and in the most tragic cases, their lives."[52]

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[50] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results," p.27
[51] Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Under Suspicion: Concerns about Racial Profiling in Education," Under suspicion: Concerns about racial profiling in education , 2017, http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/under-suspicion-concerns-about-racial-profiling-education.
[52] Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Under Suspicion: Research and Consultation Report on Racial Profiling in Ontario," Under suspicion: Research and consultation report on racial profiling in Ontario |

As a result of Ontario's Community Safety and Policing Act in March 2019, Campus Community Police Service was changed to Western Special Constable Service. Despite the name change, the role of the Special Constables remained the same, with a team of 20 constables along with additional operators and communication workers.[53] The role of Special Constables is to "ensure the safety, security and well-being of all members of the Western community".[54] However, there is a lack of transparency regarding the training Special Constable Services receive. Additionally, Special Constable Services are not required to receive EDI-D training on a regular basis. Western should require Western Special Constables to participate in EDI-D training on a regular basis along with ensuring the security on campus is representative of the student body. The hiring process for Special Constables should prioritize principles of EDI-D to diversify the team to help students feel more comfortable when interacting with Special Constables on campus. Together, these efforts will help racialized students feel safer on campus, particularly when interacting with law enforcement officials.

FOOD SERVICES ON CAMPUS

Principle: All students should have access to options meeting religious dietary restrictions for purchase at all times of the day.

Principle: All students should have access to nutritious food options that take into consideration religious restrictions and needs.

Principle: All events occurring on campus should have options meeting the religious needs of students.

Concern: Students who live on campus, or stay later on campus, typically have only limited food options that meet religious needs.

Concern: Most residence and on-campus eateries do not offer Halal and Kosher food options, severely limiting the choices available to Muslim and Jewish students.

Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2017, http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/under-suspicion-research-and-consultation-report-racial-profiling-ontario.

[53]Western University, "Campus Police Now Operating as Western Special Constable Service," Campus Community Police - Western University, 2021, https://www.uwo.ca/campussafety/news/2021/campus_police_now_operating_as_western_special_constable_service.html.

[54]Ibid.

> **Recommendation:** The AVP EDI-D should work with the AVP Housing & Ancillary Services (specifically the Great Hall Catering unit) to ensure the inclusion of Halal and Kosher food options at residence and on-campus eateries.
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> **Recommendation:** In order to reduce the amount of infrastructure/training needed, Western should outsource by purchasing healthy, ready-made Kosher/Halal meals (e.g. sandwiches) from a supplier, many of which have been identified by The MSA and Hillel Western. In this way, Western would only need to purchase a separate refrigerator to store the Halal and Kosher food options for each eatery.

For Western students, specifically those living in residence, it is convenient and easy to get food from campus eateries such as residence cafeterias. However, for students with religious dietary restrictions, this is not always the case. All students on campus should have access to food options at all times, regardless of dietary restrictions. As outlined above, the Ontario Human Rights Commission requires that institutions accommodate the religious and creed-based needs of students to the point of undue hardship.".[55] In consultation with a variety of student groups, students reported that the lack of food options made them feel "insecure" about their religion.[56] Students also articulated the logistical and emotional challenges that result from a lack of options for religious dietary restrictions in residence such as Kosher and Halal foods. Student organizations like Hillel Western, among other student groups, have voiced concerns about the limited food options available that meet the religious needs of students in both residence and at on-campus eateries.

In order to better meet the needs of these students, the AVP EDI-D and Western should work to voice the concerns of students to the AVP Housing & Ancillary Services, and specifically to the Great Hall Catering unit, to ensure that students have nutritious food options that take into consideration religious restrictions and needs. To accommodate students with dietary restrictions, Western should outsource the production of healthy and pre-made Halal and Kosher meals which would only require a separate refrigerator for storage. By outsourcing, it

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[55] Ontario Human Rights Commision, "9. The Duty to Accommodate," Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Creed, 2015, http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed/9-duty-accommodate.
[56] University Students' Council, "Racialized and Religious Students Consultation Summary", 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/15zAdzNjxa3lGT_PPwMMdqcVWcCpdNRZ1Zvy0BZ9YNlY/edit?usp=sharing.

rescues the infrastructure/training and resources needed for Western and can provide students with easy access to foods that meet their dietary restrictions.

DECOLONIZING AND DIVERSIFYING ACADEMICS

Principle: Decolonizing and diversifying academia is a critical step to achieving racial equity giving Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour the ability to thrive in post-secondary education.

Principle: All students should be knowledgeable about issues related to racial, cultural and religious inequities on campus and in the broader London community.

Concern: Academia in its present form is a result of colonization, and a failure to decolonize and diversify academia upholds the racist belief that the cultures and knowledge systems of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour do not have value in academic spaces.

Concern: Curricula at Western do not adequately educate and inform students regarding issues of equity, diversity and inclusion, and are often built through a white, colonial lens.

Concern: A failure to objectively confront the harmful and dangerous legacy of colonization stifles the success of Indigenization efforts within the post-secondary education system and thwarts efforts to develop all Western students' racial literacy.

Concern: A failure to objectively confront the harmful and dangerous legacy of colonization can have a traumatic impact on Indigenous students.

Concern: Mandatory equity training may result in retraumatization for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour and rely on the emotional labour of people of colour.

Recommendation: Western should create a scholars' grant programs for their faculty in order to incentivize improving their curriculum to reflect the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation: Western should hire a Curriculum and Pedagogy Advisor in the Office of the AVP EDI-D, parallel to the Curriculum and Pedagogy Advisor in the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, to support departments in integrating EDI-D principles into classroom spaces and diversifying curricula.

Canadian post-secondary institutions are rooted in colonial and discriminatory values and practices.[57] The Truth and Reconciliation report of 2015 explains that colonization was rooted in the belief that European settlers were racially and culturally superior to the "savage people who could never civilize themselves."[58] Residential schools and other assimilatory practices of the government were rooted in the idea to "kill the Indian in the child."[59] Colonialism and the harmful assimilatory practices are embedded in post-secondary institutions today as a result of institutionalized racism. This institutional racism is rooted in the heterocolonial and discriminatory nature of academia and requires that equity-deserving groups, including racialized and religious students, have to navigate barriers to education that white and settler-colonial students do not.[60]

All students should feel safe and welcome on their campus in academic settings to succeed in their post-secondary journey. In reality, students at Western face the impacts of institutionalized racism on a daily basis. The Racialized and Religious Students Survey found that 60% of students either somewhat or strongly disagree that the curriculum taught in their academic program was diverse.[61] 47.2% of students surveyed have experienced discomfort in a class setting due to racial or religious identity.[62] In the 2020-2021 academic year, students have reported a small increase in the discussion of race in the classroom, but there is still a lack of recognition for religious discrimination.[63] In consultations, students explained that even where discussions and coursework included issues pertaining to the experiences of racialized and religious students, that these discussions felt simply like "checking a box" and were not truly

[57] Active History, "Indigenous Peoples: A Starting Place for the History of Higher Education in Canada," Active History, January 25, 2016, https://activehistory.ca/2016/01/rethinking-higher-education-colonialism-and-indigenous-peoples/.

[58] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," Government of Canada Publications (Government of Canada, April 3, 2015), https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-7-2015-eng.pdf. p50

[59] Eric Hansen, Daniel P Games, and Alexa Manuel, "The Residential School System," Indigenous Foundations (First Nations Studies Program UBC, 2020), https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_residential_school_system/.

[60] Mary Frances O'Dowd, "Explainer: What Is Systemic Racism and Institutional Racism?," The Conversation, October 13, 2021, https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-systemic-racism-and-institutional-racism-131152.

[61] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results," September 2021.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

meaningful.[64] Students reported being mocked in academic settings as well as feeling "too small to speak up" when racial or religious discrimination occurs in the classroom.[65] This demonstrates that the curriculum at Western does not accurately educate and inform students regarding issues of equity, diversity and inclusion, which has a deeply negative impact on the learning experience of racialized and religious students.

Western must take conscious steps to decolonize academics and itself as an institution. Decolonizing academics is described as "the process in which we rethink, reframe and reconstruct the curricula and research that preserve the Europe-centred, colonial lens."[66] Curriculums outline the plan for study for a course throughout the academic year, however, they also perpetuate the knowledge, education styles and values of white settlers through the "hidden curriculum."[67] The "hidden curriculum" is the unwritten and implicit lessons of the course that can be intrinsically biased that work to convey messages that embody western values.[68] These implicit biases reinforce and perpetuate negative stereotypes, practices, and processes of knowledge production.

In order to do this work, Western should work with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and the Office of the AVP EDI-D to ensure curricula reflect principles of EDI-D in the classroom. At the University of British Columbia, the Equity Enhancement Fund was created for faculty and staff to provide financial support to create more community-based initiatives that prioritize the values of EDI-D.[69] Faculty and staff at UBC can apply for funds to help create more diverse curricula and dialogue within the education setting. A similar program at Western would similarly incentivize faculty and staff to integrate EDI-D principles into classroom spaces and diversify curricula. In addition, to help encourage faculty to make these changes. Western should hire a staff member in the Office of the AVP EDI-D to support departments in this work.

DIVERSITY & REPRESENTATION IN FACULTY AND STAFF

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[64] University Students' Council, "Racialized and Religious Students Consultation Summary", 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/15zAdzNjxa3lGT_PPwMMdqcVWcCpdNRZ1Zvy0BZ9YNlY/edit?usp=sharing.

[65] Ibid. p.36

[66] Sofia Akel, "What Does Decolonising Mean?," EachOther , 2020, https://eachother.org.uk/decolonising-the-curriculum-what-it-really-means/.

[67] James Lindsay, "Decolonizing the Curriculum," NAS, 2020, https://www.nas.org/academic-questions/33/3/decolonizing-the-curriculum.

[68] Ibid.

[69] University of British Columbia 2021 https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/equity-enhancement-fund/

Principle: Faculty and staff are central to creating a discrimination‑free environment on campus.

Principle: Faculty, staff, and student diversity enriches the educational experiences of all post-secondary students.

Principle: Faculty hiring practices should be equitable and free of discrimination.

Principle: Strategies for recruitment and hiring should seek to encourage diverse candidate pools.

Principle: Racialized and Indigenous faculty and staff should be supported and rewarded for their contributions on campus.

Principle: All faculty and staff should be committed to and trained in anti‑oppressive practices, especially those in management or student‑facing roles.

Concern: Staff and faculty on campus are not adequately trained in anti‑oppressive practices.

Concern: Black and Indigenous full-time faculty and senior leadership are severely underrepresented in post-secondary institutions.

Concern: The unique or exacerbated barriers to accessing post-secondary education for Black and Indigenous students can hinder equitable representation.

Concern: The considerable absence of race-based data in post-secondary institutions severely hampers efforts to address systemic racism and stifles the effectiveness of policies, programs, and services developed for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.

Concern: Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour face barriers to attaining tenured positions.

Recommendation: Western University should prioritize the hiring of racialized faculty and staff.

Recommendation: Western University should evaluate faculty and staff recruitment processes to ensure the hiring practices are equitable and free of discrimination.

Recommendation: Western should mandate regular faculty training that pertains to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. This training should be made mandatory in all new faculty contracts

negotiated by the university, should be included in the onboarding process for new hires, and should be added as a clause when current faculty contracts are up for re-negotiation.

Recommendation: Western should include anti-racism training as part of the process of evaluating tenure applications, with the expectation that faculty must demonstrate participation in anti-racism training in order to receive tenure.

In the Religious and Racialized Students Survey, a top concern shared by students at Western is a lack of representation not only in the makeup of students, but in the overall campus community along with faculty and staff.[70] A lack of diversity in faculty and staff can lead to feelings of isolation for students who do not see themselves reflected in the leadership and community of the university. These gaps in lived experience among faculty and staff, who influence the student experience in significant ways, perpetuate environments where the needs of racialized and religious students are ineffectively addressed. Having individuals in leadership positions that share similar lived experiences and aspects of one's identity allows for students to feel more seen and to envision themselves in positions of leadership.[71]

Faculty and staff play an important role in influencing the student post-secondary experience. A lack of diverse representation in faculty and staff can impact how students access mentors or role models and their ability to see themselves in certain positions.[72] In order for students to thrive, students must feel as though there are faculty and staff available that can understand them and share things in common to foster a sense of belonging. In consultations, students reported that increased representation in the makeup of the campus community increases the belief that "someone is bound to understand me in this room."[73] For students, an increase in representation of racialized and religious faculty will allow for students to be taught

[70] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results," September 2021.
[71] Rebekah Bastian, "The Power of Representation in Leadership Roles," Forbes (Forbes Magazine, November 9, 2020), https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebekahbastian/2020/11/09/the-power-of-representation-in-leadership-roles/?sh=1892ae776266.
[72] Anya Zoledziowski, "Lack of Faculty Diversity Can Affect Studies and Career Aspirations," The Globe and Mail, October 18, 2017, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/canadian-university-report/lack-of-faculty-diversity-can-affect-studies-and-career-aspirations/article36637410/.
[73] University Students' Council, "Racialized and Religious Students Consultation Summary", 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/15zAdzNjxa3lGT_PPwMMdqcVWcCpdNRZ1Zvy0BZ9YNlY/edit?usp=sharing.

by professors with similar lived experiences. For white students, diversity in staff and faculty also allows for students to be "exposed to a wide array of ideas, cultures, and individuals".[74]

Western should ensure equitable hiring and recruitment practices are leveraged in order to build a more diverse campus community. Recruiting more BIPOC faculty and staff will help reduce the barriers Western students face when finding peer support networks and role models upon entry to post-secondary education. For students to feel more comfortable in the Western community, faculty and staff should acknowledge and have the capacity to relate to the diverse lived experiences and systemic discrimination that racialized and religious students face encouraging a safe learning community.[75]

In the USC's Racialized and Religious survey, students reported a lack of diverse representation on campus, "particularly when it comes to the leaders and staff at Western".[76] In consultations, students have reported difficulties finding mentors on campus who understand the perspective of racial and religious students on campus.[77] Students also have reported microaggressions being common in the classroom, including the use of their race or religion in a negative manner as a "bad example" compared to Western values and places.[78] Additionally, the use of racial and religious slurs in the classroom is a common experience for many students. One student mentioned that in one class they were called a "barbarian" but the professor did not condemn the behaviour nor did they stop the discussion.[79]

Addressing staff and faculty diversity starts from the very beginning of the hiring process. At McGill University, those on academic search committees are required to complete EDI-D training.[80] Western should adopt this practice, requiring all members on hiring panels to be trained regarding EDI-D principles, and equitable hiring processes. Beyond those on hiring committees, equity, diversity and inclusion training should be made mandatory for all faculty and

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[74] Crystal J Collins and William Allan Kritsonis, "National Viewpoint: The Importance of Hiring a ... - Eric," National Journal For Publishing And Mentoring Doctoral Student Research, 2006, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED499556.pdf.

[75] Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health, "Campus Mental Health Equity, Diversity & Inclusion," Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit (Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario, 2020), https://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CICMH-Equity-Diversity-Inclusion-Toolkit-EN.pdf.

[76] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results," September 2021.

[77] University Students' Council, "Racialized and Religious Students Consultation Summary", 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/15zAdzNjxa3lGT_PPwMMdqcVWcCpdNRZ1Zvy0BZ9YNlY/edit?usp=sharing.

[78] Ibid.

[79] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results," September 2021.

[80] McGill University, "Initiatives & Education," Equity at McGill, September 10, 2020, https://www.mcgill.ca/equity/initiatives-education.

staff. While this is not possible mid-contract, all new faculty contracts negotiated by the university should include a clause addressing training expectations, this should be included as part of future contract negotiations. All tenure track faculty must not only complete EDI-D training to receive training, but should also be required to complete training continually throughout the tenure period. Mandating training for faculty and staff will empower those individuals to contribute to a more inclusive, comfortable and safe academic setting for students.

ACCESS TO AND AWARENESS OF RESOURCES

Principle: All students at Western should be aware of the resources available regarding equity, diversity and inclusion on campus along with the reporting procedure for discrimination on campus
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Principle: All instances of discrimination on campus should be approached from an equity and inclusion framework.

Concern: Western students are unaware of the resources available for support pertaining to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Concern: Western students are unaware of the online incident reporting tool and how to use it properly.

Concern: There is a lack of effective promotion of the resources available for Western students pertaining to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Concern: There is no centralized EDI-D resource and information page at Western, and there is a lack of awareness among students of educational and academic opportunities to build an awareness of the foundations of EDI-D.

Recommendation: The Office of the AVP EDI-D should work to further refine the online incident reporting tool and develop a communications strategy for improving student awareness of the tool.

Recommendation: Western should incorporate the incident reporting tool and EDI-D resources into the Western App under the Safe Campus tab.

Recommendation: The Office of the AVP EDI-D should work with the Human Rights Office to analyze data collected through the incident reporting tool in order to address the root causes of racism on campus.

Recommendation: Western should make resources easily available to students as they are transitioning onto campus as first-year students.

Recommendation: Western should create a centralized resources webpage for EDI-D-related services and opportunities on campus, including course recommendations with content related to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation: Western should create an OWL page where the resources listed on the aforementioned webpage are linked.

Recommendation: Western should create an instructional guide as to how to report discrimination on campus, available on the centralized page.

Recommendation: Western should require all course syllabi to contain discrimination reporting resources and information for students.

The USC Religious & Racialized Students Survey Report found that 38.9% of the students surveyed did not seek support after experiencing racism or religious discrimination at Western.[81] Students described the experience of seeking help at Western as "performative, non-existent, anxiety-inducing, terrifying, stressful, exhausting" and more.[82] Additionally, students reported that there is a lack of follow-up, and 29.2% of students surveyed "did not think it would make a difference to report."[83] When students use the resources available to them and report experiences of discrimination on campus, they should not feel more isolated after reaching out to Western for help. Therefore, in consultation with equity-deserving student groups, and relevant stakeholders and more, Western and the Office of the AVP EDI-D should work to improve the online discrimination reporting tool to reflect the concerns of students. This online reporting tool should be made easily available for students via the Western App under the Safe Campus tab so, therefore students can easily access the tool at all times on campus. Additionally, the Office of the AVP EDI-D should ensure that the information and data collected by the online

[81] University Students' Council, "Religious and Racialized Students Survey Results,"
[82] Ibid. p.25
[83] Ibid. p.27

discrimination reporting tool should be used to inform the equity and safety initiatives at Western.

Other students indicate the process of reporting is confusing, and 16.7% of students surveyed did not know where to go or how to report discrimination on campus.[84] Students report feeling as though there is a gap between racialized and religious student groups on campus and the available student supports, and many students are still unaware of the resources available at Western. Many students explained that if the tools were promoted, better reflected the needs of racialized and religious students, and were made more accessible for students, they would be more likely to seek support.

In order to address this lack of accessibility, Western should expose students to the resources available in as many ways as possible. In order to support students to do their own work to expand their understanding of racism and decolonization, Western should create a centralized webpage that offers a one-stop-shop for courses, programs, and extracurricular opportunities that will further students' understanding equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization. The University of Toronto Students' Union has created a centralized page of resources, student organizations as well as courses to take that discuss principles of EDI-D throughout the various faculties.[85] The document, Advancing Equity in Education Organizational Document, contains 70 pages of programs, course options along with student-led organizations associated with the programs to join.[86] A similar, Western-specific resource would be a valuable addition for students seeking to improve their own understanding and actions. With this document made widely available, students will be able to select specific courses that integrate principles of EDI-D to learn more, in addition to learning about student-led organizations that are also available on campus. This webpage should include an instructional guide of how to report discrimination on campus and any specific supports, both on and off-campus, available for students.

One way to increase exposure to this webpage is to create a centralized resource page on OWL for students to access that contains the e-list of resources available such as mental health

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[84] Ibid.

[85] University of Toronto Students' Union, "Advancing Equity in Education Organizational Document," University of Toronto Students' Union, 2021, https://www.utsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Advancing-Equity-in-Education-Organizational-Document-1.pdf.

[86] Ibid.

services, the discrimination rreporting tool, and information about various student groups on campus for students to get involved with. This OWL page can also include how to access these services and resources, with links to the existing webpage. By providing a collection of resources and support on the main website that students access on a daily basis, students will be more aware of resources and be able to better access resources.

Another way to increase exposure to reporting resources is to require that all course syllabi include EDI-D resources for students, including information on how to report incidents of discrimination. Currently, course syllabi at Western require a support services section, with links to various supports regarding academics as well as mental health support options.[87] As the majority of students are required or choose to thoroughly read their various course syllabus at the beginning of the academic year, including EDI-D resources and information on how to report incidents of discrimination will expose students to the available resources so that they are better able to better understand and access resources on campus. Finally, Western should use their social media presence to promote the resources available to students pertaining to EDI resources. This can include instructional and educational campaigns at the beginning of the academic year to inform students of the resources available, along with continual updates about resources and changes on campus.

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[87] Western University, "Preparing a Syllabus," Centre for Teaching and Learning - Western University, 2021, https://teaching.uwo.ca/curriculum/coursedesign/syllabus.html.