

COU Academic Colleagues Committee

Report to Academic Council (May 18, 2021)

Alyson King (COU Academic Colleague Representative for Ontario Tech University)

Synopsis

This report provides an overview of the Academic Colleagues (AC) meetings on March 24 and April 1, 2021, and May 11-12, 2021. This report also covers the 311th Meeting of COU Council on April 1, 2021. All of these meetings occurred online.

Background

The objective of the Council of Ontario Universities' Academic Colleagues committee is to contribute the academic perspectives to the COU Council, which consists of the executive heads and academic colleagues of the institution members of the COU.

Meeting Summaries

COU Colleagues Meeting (March 24, 2021)

Preparation for Council Meeting

As part of the COU Council meeting, the Academic Colleagues make a presentation the about key issues identified by the Colleagues as being important to the university sector. Most of the March 24, 2021, meeting was spent preparing for the April 1st Council Meeting. The presentation planning focused on "Planning for the Post-Pandemic University." The topics were: EDI, on-line and blended learning, mental health, and student access. Further information on the presentation is included in the attachment.

COU Colleagues meeting, Thursday, April 1, 2021 (9:30 am – 11:30 pm)

Selection of new co-Chair

Karleen Pendleton Jiménez stepped down as co-Chair Academic Colleagues. Catherine Amara was selected as the new co-Chair.

COU Update

Fall 2020 Enrolment

Total Fall full-time enrolment increased by 2.1% across the sector. There were, however, strong differences across the sector, level of study and immigration status.

Undergraduate: Total undergraduate enrolment increased by 2.3%—with domestic increasing by 1.7% and international by 5.3%.

Domestic undergraduate: Growth in domestic undergraduate enrolment is primarily due to the sector experiencing the highest transition rates in at least the last 10 years. We also know that there has been an increase in the number of students moving from part-time to full-time studies, higher overall course loads, and that more students in three-year programs are continuing to complete a four-year degree.

Enrolment in the summer, which is not included in these numbers was also significantly higher than in previous years.

International undergraduate: The 5.3% increase in international undergraduate enrolment was not due to higher transition rates but by flow-through enrolment. Over the last 6 years, international enrolment has increased by between 9% and 18%. Fall 2020 transition rates at their lowest in the past 6 years and student intake decreased by 1.4%.

Graduate enrolment: Graduate enrolment increased by 1.4%, with domestic increasing by 3.6% and international decreasing by 3.7%. The drop in international enrolment was at the master's level (including first year PhD) and at the graduate diploma level, which together experienced an 8.6% decrease. Doctoral enrolment (2nd year and up) increased by 8.7%.

Budget

The Ontario Budget 2021 centers on two key pillars: Protecting People's Health and Protecting Our Economy. The Budget focuses on "defeating COVID-19" through a series of actions and an increase in COVID-19-related funding to \$51 billion over four years. The ministry did not provide detailed information about funding for universities and colleges. COU has reached out to the ministry and is waiting for a response. There were also no announcements related to tuition. COU continues to advocate for policies that support the financial sustainability of universities.

COVID-19 Relief Funding: On March 19, government announced \$106.4 million for COVID-19 funding for PSE "directed to those institutions facing the greatest financial impacts from COVID and [taking] into account size and relative financial health/availability of resources."

Ontario Jobs Training Tax Credit: The Budget announced the temporary Ontario Jobs Training Tax Credit to help individuals aged 25 to 65 upskill as a response to the pandemic. This temporary, refundable tax credit applies to the 2021 tax year and applies to individuals earning an income of between \$10,000 and approximately \$150,000. The credit is designed to cover 50% of eligible tuition and course fees (e.g. ancillary fees and charges, examination fees) from an eligible educational institution (e.g. university, college) up to a maximum of \$2,000.

Mitac internships: On March 10, the government announced an investment of \$39.5 million to help Mitacs create up to 8,000 paid innovative research internships and upskilling opportunities for postsecondary students

Digital Learning and Micro-credentials: Budget 2021 announced a new investment of \$21.4 million (\$10.7 million in each of 2021-22 and 2022-23) toward the Virtual Learning Strategy. This builds on the previously announced \$50 million in funding available to PSE institutions through [eCampusOntario \(December 11, 2020\)](#). Budget 2021 announced a new \$2 million allocation for a platform that will support the Virtual Learning Passport, building on and integrated with the micro-credential and Virtual Learning Strategy. The platform will be designed to issue digital credentials for life-long learners. On March 18, the government confirmed the expansion of the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to include nearly 600 micro-credential programs. This follows the previous announcement of a \$59.5

million investment over three years in a micro-credential strategy as part of the government's overall virtual learning strategy.

Mental Health: The Budget re-announced funding of \$7 million to help increase access to mental health and addiction services for postsecondary students during COVID-19 that was announced on [February 9, 2021](#). This funding builds on the \$19.25 million investment announced in October 2020 to support mental health supports for postsecondary students in 2020–21, an increase of \$3.25 million over last year. This one-time funding will provide services to those studying on campus or virtually. The government has indicated that the focus of this funding is on the needs of vulnerable and diverse groups, such as Indigenous students, LGBTQ+ students and students with disabilities. The budget announced that Ontario is providing additional funding of \$175 million in 2021–22 as part of the investment of \$3.8 billion over 10 years to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy.

Capital & Facilities Renewal: The Budget announced \$493 million over three years for postsecondary facilities renewal building on the Budget 2020 facilities renewal announcement. \$90 million in funding was announced to support the College Equipment Renewal Fund (CERF) and a new universities' Training Equipment Renewal Fund (TERF). This new funding for universities is \$30 million over three years (\$10 million per year) and will be application-based with expanded project eligibility. While MCU is not yet in a position to confirm institutional allocations to COU members for 2022-23 or 2023-34 for the FRP envelope, over the three years, universities are expected to receive approximately 64.4% of the envelope, which is an increase compared to the share allocated to universities in 2020.

Intellectual Property (IP): The Budget stated that the government is working with universities, colleges and research institutes to clarify the commercialization mandates of postsecondary institutions with the objective of ensuring that IP generated through taxpayer-funded research will have social and economic benefits for Ontario. MCU has communicated to COU that they are currently planning consultations on this item in the spring and more information will be available shortly.

The Government announced a new investment of \$1.5 million in funding to support the Special Implementation Team on Intellectual Property. This funding will support the advancement of web-based IP curriculum, as well the development of a centralized Ontario resource and creation of a robust IP policy to help protect home-grown ideas and prioritize commercialization to drive Ontario's innovation ecosystem.

Shared in the lock-up, but not reflected in the budget document, is that the government will provide \$6.16 million in funding over two years (\$3.16 million in 2021-22 and \$3 million in 2022-23) to develop an Ontario Health Data Platform IP Policy, which will create rapid access pathways to data for researchers. The government has committed to working closely with the sector on development and implementation.

Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN): The Budget announced a \$56.4 million investment over the next four years to create the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN). OVIN will accelerate the development of electric, connected and autonomous vehicles by fostering collaboration and

partnerships between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), academia, the auto industry and battery sector.

College Investments: The government is investing \$121 million to support almost 9,000 personal support workers (PSWs), including \$115 million to train up to 8,200 PSWs through publicly funded colleges. In February 2021, the government announced an investment of \$4.1 million for eight training projects, including in regions hardest hit by the pandemic, to support the training of 373 new PSWs. The government also provided up to \$2.4 million through a pilot scholarship program to fund the training costs of up to 300 students for PSW positions in the Ottawa area. Colleges (but not universities) are included along with community organizations and training providers in the \$60.8 million to upgrade internet and digital infrastructure under employment and training supports.

Digital Main Street Platform: The government is investing an additional \$10 million in the Digital Main Street platform for 2021-22. This follows an initial \$57 million investment announced in June 2020 in partnership with the federal government. This platform is designed to help SMEs in Ontario improve their online presence and achieve digital transformation. To date, this platform has hired over 600 students to work on projects with independent businesses. These investments will generate up to 1,400 new jobs for students and recent graduates.

Invest Ontario: The Budget announced a \$400 million investment over four years to create the Invest Ontario Fund, which will support Invest Ontario, the new provincial agency focused on promoting the province as a key investment destination, and encourage investments in the advanced manufacturing, technology and life sciences sectors. The agency will provide expertise and customizable investor services to support investment opportunities, such as available financial assistance, talent support, advisory supports and concierge services. One of the objectives of Invest Ontario is to leverage “the expertise of the business community, regional partners and other levels of government to inform the Corporation and the Minister on investment priorities and to enhance co-ordination with regional partners on investment opportunities in Ontario,” where regional partners are postsecondary institutions.

Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate Grant : Ontario is investing \$1.6 million over two years to support the Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate Grant program, which will support community-based anti-racism initiatives focusing on anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Employment and training support: The Budget announced an investment of an additional \$614.3 million for 2020-21 and 2021-22 to provide targeted employment and training supports. This includes up to:

- \$85.0 million to support the Skills Development Fund to help training and employment organizations assist workers during the province’s economic recovery.
- \$117.3 million to assist women, racialized individuals, Indigenous peoples, youth and people with disabilities who are facing the highest rates of unemployment during the pandemic.
- \$157.2 million to provide workers in the hardest-hit sectors with career counselling and urgent training to find new careers and good jobs.
- \$60.8 million to upgrade and expand high-speed internet and other digital infrastructure.

- \$194 million to support Ontario workers with additional employment and training programs.

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[311th Meeting of Council , April 1, 2021 \(12:15-1:30 pm\)](#)

President’s Report: Steve Orsini discussed the resiliency of the university sector and the importance of building back better post-pandemic.

Academic Colleagues’ Report: Doug Iverson reported on the work of the Academic Colleagues.

Report from the Standing Committee on Government and Community Relations: Taking a 3 prong approach to defining goals regarding government and community relations. Important point to note is

that the COU is not a substitute for local relationships. The umbrella strategy offered by the COU is important, but individual universities can't lose sight of the local ecosystem.

Report from Standing Committee on Relationships with Other Postsecondary Institutions: This committee has tended to focus on the relationship with colleges, regarding differentiation and the crossing of borders. They will broaden the mandate to consider other relationships with other education groups (such as K-12) because it is too limiting to only focus on colleges. A detailed presentation about Institutional Development and Quality was prepared and delivered by Peter Gooch, a consultant who was hired to assist the COU in understanding the changing environment and the potential new directions in Ontario's regulatory framework for degree granting institutions. Discussions focused on the future relationship between colleges and universities primarily driven by the Ministry's approval of degree and professional post-graduate programs for colleges and the interest of colleges in offering 3-year degree programs. It was felt that there needs to be a clearer understanding of college and university roles and a level playing field if both institutions are going to provide degree and professional post-graduate programs.

Discussion Item: Planning for the Post-Pandemic University (Presentation and discussion led by Academic Colleagues. *See Appendix A* for detailed discussion prompt.) Discussion amongst Executive Heads and Academic Colleagues raised points about the challenges and opportunities in thinking about how positive long-term change can occur. We need to work together over the long term to ensure change is accelerated. We need to collect data beyond the climate surveys that have been conducted. We need to collect race-based data at the community level so that universities can help make Canada more inclusive. Concern was expressed about the fatigue and time commitment of Faculty members regarding commitment to teaching, putting research on hold, and other challenges during the pandemic. These challenges are important to plan for so that Faculty can take time off. There is a learning opportunity – in the online setting, we are hearing the voices of those we don't normally hear. At the same time, there are challenges regarding who is present and able to speak up in online meetings, as well as an inability to read people. Some questions raised include: is there room for blending media with in person learning? How can we benefit from lessons learned, UDL, indigenizing? How do universities take up these issues? It is important to study these things longitudinally.

COU Colleagues Meeting, May 11, 2021 (6-8 pm)

Conversation with Arig al Shaibah, Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion, McMaster University: Dr. al Shaibah provided an overview of the equity and inclusion initiatives being undertaken by McMaster University under her direction. The actions being taken includes:

- a Black faculty hiring initiative,
- advancing inclusive excellence through strategic framing in that equity-deserving groups (EDGs) are under-utilized and underserved, as are equity-related research and scholarship; real change requires an equity lens and a more expansive evaluation of merit
- using a 4 pillar strategic EDI framework
- building on a longstanding community interest in expanding African and African diaspora studies and social justice research and teaching
- Strategic Excellence and Equity in Recruitment & Retention Program – is a proactive program using an equity lens to advance inclusive excellence in a manner that augments rather than

replacing standard hires in order to address persistent under-representation and systemic racism

- Job ads are carefully crafted; applicants must submit a **statement of contributions to EDI** (to ensure that hires are not just about representation)

Full details are included in the attached PowerPoint slides and Q&A document used at McMaster (Appendix B).

COU Colleagues Meeting, May 12, 2021 (9 am -12 pm)

1. **Information Sharing** among members of the committee regarding how universities are planning to offer courses in the next academic year and other common issues.
2. **Canada and International Competitiveness:**
 - a. Graduate programs in Ontario are more expensive than in the US and other places in Canada.
 - b. International growth in Canada of 17.5% in 2018-19. Most students are from India and China. An over-reliance on Chinese students when geo-political tensions are high could affect enrolment.
 - c. Impact of pandemic is being assessed, but Ontario had a 3.1% increase in enrolment (mostly at the undergraduate level).
 - d. Recommendations: reduce reliance on Chinese students; diversify recruitment; develop strategies to appeal to growing international markets.
3. **COU Update to Academic Colleagues**
 - a. **Tuition Framework**

On April 30, Ontario announced a one-year extension of the tuition freeze for Ontario residents studying at colleges and universities. Tuition for out-of-province students will return to a system similar to the previous framework, with universities having the option to increase tuition by up to 3% in 2020-21. Ontario residency will be based on the OSAP definition. The tuition freeze only applies to programs that are eligible to be claimed for operating grants. Full-cost recovery programs and tuition for funding ineligible students (mostly international students) are not included. The ministry will schedule a meeting in the coming weeks to address technical issues, such as operationalizing the policy, required changes to data collection, tuition compliance reporting, and the interactions between tuition fees and other issue areas. COU continues to advocate for adequate revenue for universities as well as affordability and access for students.
 - b. **Conversion of NOSM and Hearst into standalone degree-granting universities**

The Ontario government has introduced proposed legislation to establish the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) and Université de Hearst (Hearst) as independent, standalone degree-granting institutions. If passed, the legislation would formally recognize the integral role these institutions play in providing students with access to medical training and French-language studies in Northern Ontario. COU sent a letter to the Minister expressing the sector's concerns over the lack of consultation with universities regarding the impact this decision will have on institutions and the sector as a whole.
 - c. **Micro-credentials**

On April 23, COU and Colleges Ontario sent a joint letter to Minister Romano asking to work together to ensure the success of the micro-credentials program, which includes the

development of robust quality assurance frameworks that respect institutional autonomy and allow the sectors to respond nimbly and flexibly to rapidly changing economic circumstances and skills requirements. Ontario colleges and universities have already begun the work of adapting their quality assurance processes to integrate micro-credentials. Modifying existing quality processes ensures the quality of programs, avoids additional red tape allowing and allows institutions to remain nimble and flexible in responding to the needs of employers and learners.

On April 30, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) and Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) released a call for proposals for the Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund. The Fund will provide \$15M to institutions to accelerate the development of rapid training programs. This includes \$11M to support the development of micro-credentials, and four regional Impact Awards of up to \$1M that may be awarded to applicants whose projects are most successful, scalable, and have a significant community impact. Additional consideration will be given to proposals that include work-integrated learning (WIL) components. The deadline for proposals is June 25, 2021.

4. **COU update on pre-election strategy:** With the next provincial election expected to be on or before June 2022, so they are starting to plan now for a pre-election strategy to position the sector with a narrative about the importance of the university sector for the recovery of the province.
5. **Quality Council report:**
 - a. In addition to the normal business of approving new programs, reviewing audits and cyclical program reviews, etc, the following items were addressed:
 - i. Transferring Laurentian Programs: with programs recently being cut from Laurentian, there are questions regarding whether other institutions can absorb those programs/students, particularly to help students who are already enrolled and need to graduate. The following principles will apply:
 1. Where an institution already has that same program, students may transfer to or study on letter of permission at that institution, as in the normal course.
 2. Where the institution does not have that program, it cannot simply take it over from Laurentian without going through the new program approval process. Keep in mind that the program approvals by the Quality Council include assessments of faculty, space, and library resources, and not just curriculum.
 - ii. Second round of institutional audits: the Audit Committee will soon be starting the second round of institutional audits. This may pose some challenges for the five institutions that are “early” in the provincial audit cycle (Brock, Ottawa, Western, Carleton, Queen’s), and so will not have had a chance to adjust their IQAP documents and related processes to reflect the new Quality Assurance Framework. Accordingly, the audit process for these institutions will take place in two phases: the “regular” audit with site visit, which will focus on progress made since the institution’s first audit (2012-13 or 2013-14); and a desk audit four years later, which will focus on a sample of program approvals/CPRs conducted since the new QAF and

IQAP were approved. Institutions will not be expected to complete a second self-study for the desk audit.

Discussion prompt for Council meeting on April 1, 2021

Planning for the post-pandemic university

This past year has been a huge challenge for all members of universities: students, faculty members, staff, and administrators. As we look forward to returning to campus in September 2021 (with some limitations and restrictions still in place) and a return to 'normal' in September 2022, the Academic Colleagues have been discussing how we incorporate the pandemic experience into short-term and longer-term planning. We have centred our discussion on two general questions related to four themes:

- What have we learnt from the past year and how we can apply those lessons in the future?
- What can we do to ensure that we provide better and more inclusive learning experiences and support for our students?

1) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion - Karleen

All universities are committed to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. As we return to campus, we must do so in ways that incorporate and facilitate anti-oppressive and inclusive practices. Doing so effectively will require the collection of data to support anti-oppressive and inclusive practices.

- How can universities ensure that the return to campus does not re-inscribe inequalities?
- How do we incorporate anti-racism practices as we welcome back students to our campuses, especially Asian, Black, and international students?
- **How will universities ensure the collection of appropriate data?** Those who come back as well as those who do not. Both localized data and cross-sector data.

2) Online and Blended Learning – Catherine C

The online environment, including synchronous, asynchronous and blended learning, affords advantages, such as flexibility and versatility. These may increase access for many students, although it may decrease access for others. Rethinking the use of space on campus and the supports for online and in-person learning, especially human resources, is essential and will need 3-5 years to fully develop the resources and infrastructure. There are real problems with academic integrity, workload for both faculty and students, and cost that must be addressed.

- What is the appropriate balance between in-person, blended, and online learning (both synchronous and asynchronous)? Pedagogically, what teaching and learning is best done in person or through blended or online instruction?
- How will universities invest in online and blended learning (technology and people) to make it truly effective, while supporting students and avoiding re-inscribing inequalities?
- How can universities address the access issues associated with online and blended learning and provide appropriate support to students?

3) Student Mental Health - Kim

Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on youth and early adults and the culture shock that will be experienced by new and returning students, universities must address student mental health by developing best practices, creating equitable policies, and providing students a degree of control over their learning and workload.

- How do we support student mental health in a still evolving context to ensure student success?
- How do we maintain academic integrity and high-quality learning experiences while ensuring that we provide students (who may also be Covid survivors) compassion, flexibility, and realistic expectations?
- What lessons have we learnt from the pandemic experience to better support student mental health and to ensure that we centre student mental health in our teaching, mentoring, and academic regulations?

4) Accessibility

Universities are committed to access, particularly for traditionally underrepresented students, and the pandemic has had both positive and negative impacts on accessibility.

- What are the bridging needs for students whose learning has been interrupted by the pandemic and who is responsible for remediating? The university? The instructor? The program/faculty?
- How do we ensure adequate preparation for second-entry programs (e.g., medical or law school)? How do we ensure that access to second-entry programs is not negatively affected by the pandemic?

Black Faculty Cohort Hiring Initiative: Lessons Learned

Presented by:

Arig al Shaibah, Ph.D.
Associate-Vice-President, Equity & Inclusion
Adjunct Associate Professor, Sociology

COU Academic
Colleagues

May 11, 2021





Land Acknowledgement

McMaster University is located on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and Mississauga Nations and within the lands protected by the **Dish with One Spoon** wampum agreement.

Strategic Excellence & Equity in Recruitment & Retention (STEERR) Program

Accelerated Black Faculty Cohort Hiring Initiative

- Imperative – Strategic Framing
- Initiation – Concept Development and Case Building
- Implementation – Process and Outcomes
- Insights – Lessons Learned

Imperative – Strategic Framing

Advancing Inclusive Excellence

- diverse people and perspectives essential to advancing excellence
- *equity-deserving groups* (EDGs) remain under-utilized and under-served
- equity-related research and scholarship remains under-recognized and under-rewarded
- inclusive excellence requires an equity lens and use more expansive evaluation of merit

Strategic Framework

2019 Launch of EDI Strategy and 2019 – 2022 Action Plan

- Development of 4 Pillar Strategic EDI Framework
- Campus consultation leading to launch of Action Plan
 - Key Partners African Caribbean Faculty Association
- Six Objectives and 57 Priorities
 - Objective 3 (Inclusive/Interdisciplinary Curricula)
 - Objective 6i (Recruitment/Retention of EDGs)



OBJECTIVE 3

To enhance inclusivity and opportunities for interdisciplinarity in curricula and scholarship across Departments and Faculties

Short-term Priority	Medium-term Priority	Long-term Priority
Online Inclusive Teaching and Learning Handbook	EDI Capacity for Tri-agency Program and Research Grant Funding Requirements	Critical Intercultural Competency Development for International and Graduate Student Supervisors
African and African Diaspora Studies Minor Expansion	EDI Training and Resources for Faculty	EDI-Related Learning Outcomes and Pedagogical Resources
Area Studies Synergies	EDI Training and Resources for Sessionals and TAs	EDI Integration in Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP)

OBJECTIVE 6 (i)

To enhance the recruitment and retention of equity-seeking employees

Short-term Priority	Medium-term Priority	Long-term Priority
Employment Equity Facilitator Program	Strategic Faculty Hiring Initiatives	Early Career Faculty Development
Search Committee Training	Tenure & Promotion Policy and Practices	Employment Systems Review
Institution-wide Faculty Hiring Practices	Career Progression & Merit Policy and Practices	

Initiation – Concept Development and Case Building

Longstanding Community Interest as an Institutional Priority

- Longstanding interest in expanding [African and African Diaspora Studies](#) and social justice research and teaching
- Historic advocacy for AADS expansion and more Black scholars (a “cluster” hire) was not successful
- Embedding priority in EDI Strategy codified imperative and created an accountability mechanism (Jun 2019)
- Door was open to renew exploration and models to achieve community and institutional goals
- Partnered with critical social/race/feminist scholars and ACFAM to develop and articulate the need (Jun 2019 – Feb 2020)
- Proposed targeted “cohort” hiring as a special program to accelerate achievement of hiring goals
- Developed Strategic Hiring Model in which Accelerated Black Faculty Cohort Hiring Initiatives would be situated
- **Death of George Floyd emphasizes need and creates more urgency (May 25, 2020)**
- African Caribbean Faculty Association submits Black Excellence paper to President – including demand for faculty hires
- Pitched Proposal for Strategic Hiring Model and Accelerated Black Faculty Hiring Initiative (Jun – Nov 2020)
 - AVPEI discussed proposal and finessed with Deans of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Science
 - Proposal presented to all Deans at Provost’s Council (President invited) – **invited to participate** with aim for pan-Faculty initiative
 - Proposal discussed several more times with ACFAM membership before gaining **full engagement from all Deans**
- Provost commitment of **\$2M annually** to fund eligible initiatives under **STEERR Program**
 - Allocation of **\$1.5M for Black Faculty Cohort Hiring Initiative** for two hires in each Faculty for five years

Strategic Excellence and Equity in Recruitment & Retention Program

Positioning and Rationale for a Strategic Hiring Program

- Must use proactive measures and an equity lines to advance inclusive excellence
- Must be complementary to Standard Hiring Processes to augment rather than replace
- Must be understood as aligned with institutional strategic priorities

Initiatives eligible for funding through STEERR:

- **accelerated recruitment of faculty from severely underrepresented EDG groups;**
- securing a dual career faculty hires (e.g., second faculty hire, PDF, support doctoral completion);
- subsidizing appropriate benefits and supports for new early career EDG faculty;
- renegotiating terms of employment to retain mid-career and established EDG faculty;
- establishing contractually limited appointments and post-doctoral fellowships for EDG scholars;
- initiatives to diversify future candidate pools available for tenure-track and tenure appointments;
- developing courses with social, global, environmental equity, justice, sustainability learning outcomes;
- establishing bursaries and scholarships for EDG students;
- student access and success initiatives programs; and
- other initiatives that are aligned with the goals of the STEER/R Program.

Accelerated Black Faculty Cohort Hiring Initiative

Rationale for Targeted Recruitment of Black Scholars and Benefits

- **Persistent underrepresentation** seen in census, name/face recognition scans, and community networks
- Disaggregated data and testimonials highlights the **untenable dearth** of Black faculty members.
- **Profound impacts** of systemic anti-Black racism and community calls to action

Increasing representation of Black scholars advances employment equity and inclusive excellence goals, AND:

- increases the number of faculty role models and mentors for Black undergraduate and graduate students;
- creates a critical mass and larger academic and professional network for existing complement of Black faculty;
- relieves some of the burden with respect to administrative service commitments;
- grows the coaching and mentorship supports for Black and other racialized students and staff;
- increases research and scholarship contributing to Black & African Diasporic Studies;
- builds teaching capacity to address racism through critical race studies and social justice courses; and
- enriches efforts towards more interdisciplinary and community-engaged research and scholarship, for example.

Presentation to Faculty Deans

Benefits

This approach aims to attract excellent applicants who may not otherwise apply in the following ways:

- (1) The broad and bold university-wide commitment to hiring and supporting Black scholars signals the University's authentic interest in fostering a welcoming culture and climate for Black scholars.
- (2) The cohort approach – hiring several scholars at the same time or relatively close timeframes – provides the opportunity of belonging to multiple diverse academic communities and professional networks, including those representative of the Black/African Diaspora.
- (3) The intentional language of the Job Ad coupled with the cohort approach and targeted nature of the hiring is expected to counter the stereotype threat phenomenon (internalization of racial bias) where competitive candidates count themselves out.
- (4) The use of a single or a couple of Job Ads speaks to value for interdisciplinary breadth, while still recognizing the need for disciplinary specificity

Concerns and Mitigation Strategies

What about Indigenous priorities?

- Consultation with Indigenous Education Council
- Commitment to fund distinct hiring priorities

What if there is backlash about targeting hiring?

- Human Rights Code/Charter provisions
- Messaging key (Q&A)

What if we cannot find suitable scholars?

- Only excellent candidates will be hire
- Not a tokenistic or quota program
- Continue to expanding pathways for Black scholars

Implementation – Process and Outcomes

Principles Underpinning STEERR Program and Cohort Initiative

- Careful crafting of **Single** Job Advertisement
 - Preferential/targeted hire permissible via **Human Rights Special Programs** clause (Checklist completed)
 - Inclusive excellence framing (to **counter backlash** against employment equity and affirmative action)
 - Qualified individuals who **self-identify** as persons of Black/African descent **and lived experience**
 - **Self-identification** Survey (EDGs) with addition of screening question for Black/African ancestry
 - Requirement to submit **Statement of Contributions to EDI**
 - Open to **interdisciplinary** work and invitation to **identify possible home Faculties**
 - Deans populate Ad with disciplinary content relating to account for **Faculty strategic priorities**

Implementation – Process and Outcomes

Principles Underpinning STEERR Program and Cohort Initiative

- Search Process Flow Chart developed to promote **coordinated decentralization**
 - All applications processed through online job portal and tracked by **Provost's Office, Faculty Relations**
 - Central **Triage Team** (with ACFAM members) established – double check self-ID, send applications to Faculties
 - Faculties determine search processes at unit-level but must follow [Faculty Recruitment & Retention Policy](#) and [Handbook](#) with embedded **equity principles and practices**
 - **All Search Committees Co-Chaired by ACFAM member** and all Committee members must take bias/equity training (per Policy)
 - **Periodic Check-Ins with Co-Chairs to get update on status of hiring processes**
 - **Provost's Office fielding inquiries, strategizing on communications – individuals and mass communications**

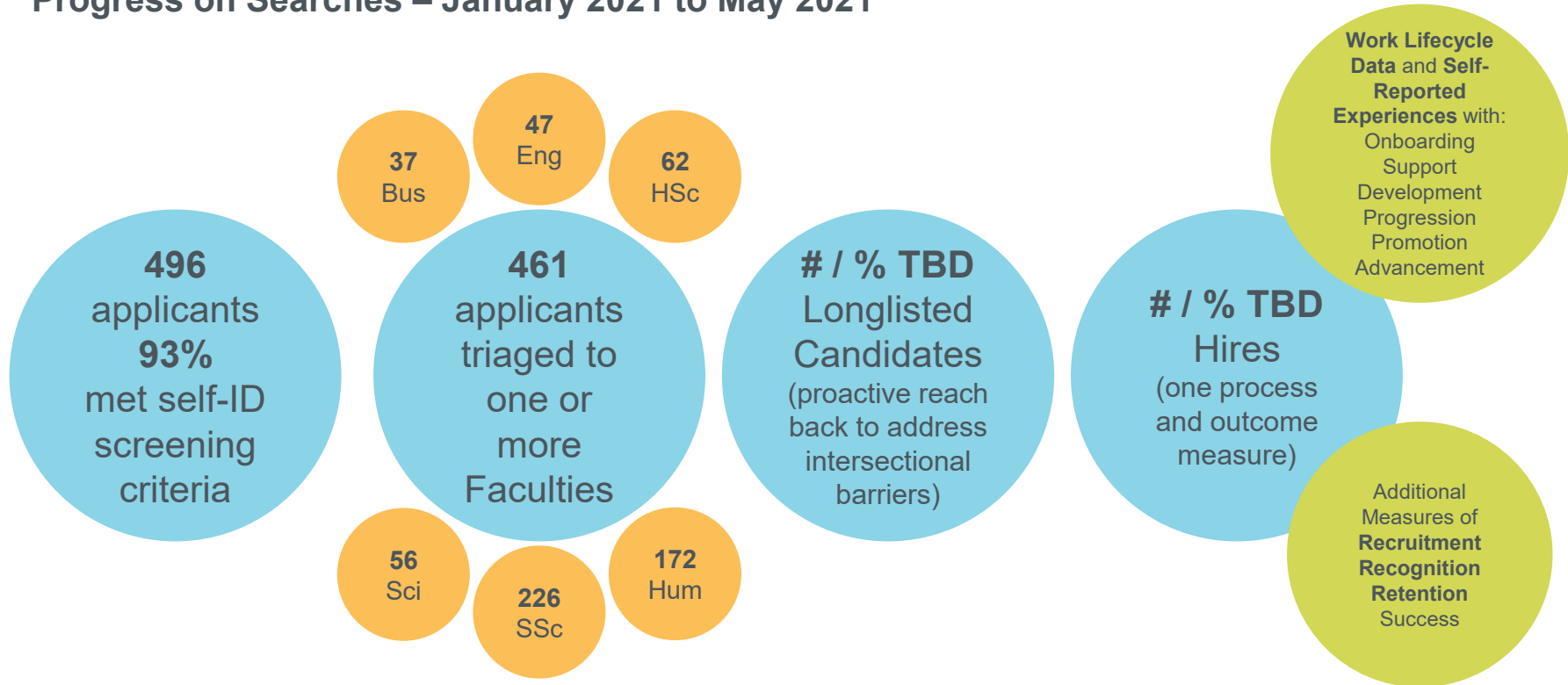
Implementation – Process and Outcomes

Principles Underpinning STEERR Program and Cohort Initiative

- Ensure onboarding and ongoing support mechanisms are established
 - **Black Excellence Q&A** to answer inquiries and counter backlash
 - ACFAM *Thrive* Faculty Development Program – **coaching relationships** to support thriving careers
 - **Suite of programming** sponsored by AVPEI and VP, Faculty to support Faculty Development

Implementation – Process and Outcomes

Progress on Searches – January 2021 to May 2021





“Even If we had conducted a general search, the candidates we are interviewing would still have been at the top... Some of these strong candidates were attracted to these position because it is a cohort hire. They would not have applied otherwise.”

~ Dean of the School of Business

Self-ID by Faculty	Search Stage	Indigenous		Disability		Women		Trans		LGB+		
Business	All Applicants	3.0%		3.4%		34.5%						
	Viable Applicant	0%		3.6%		35.7%						
	Longlist			0%		46.7%						
	Shortlist											
	Hire											
Engineering	All Applicants	5.9%		2.9%		17.6%						
	Viable Applicant	3.7%		3.7%		18.5%						
	Longlist	0%		7.7%		7.7%						
	Shortlist											
	Hire											
Science	All Applicants			5.3%		36.8%				5.3%		
	Viable Applicant											
	Longlist											
	Shortlist											
	Hire											
Social Science	All Applicants	1.1%		5.5%		45.1%		1.6%		8.8%		
	Viable Applicant	0.7%		3.5%		43.1%		2.1%		9.7%		
	Longlist	0%		0%		54.2%		4.2%		12.5%		
	Shortlist					50%		0%		16.7%		
	Hire											
Humanities	All Applicants	SOTA	0.7%	ECS	9.5%		45.3%		3.4%		19.6%	
	Viable Applicant		1.5%		16.7%	10.4%	33.3%	44.8%	16.7%	6%	33.3%	28.4%
	Longlist		4.5%		33.3%	13.6%	50%	40.9%	33.3%	9.1%	50%	31.8%
	Shortlist		0%		100%	25%	50%	50%	50%	0%	50%	50%
	Hire											
Health Sciences	All Applicants	BCHM		PH		29.4%						
	Viable Applicant					16.7%						
	Longlist											
	Shortlist											
	Hire											

Insights – Lessons Learned

What's Working?

**Faculties
Leveraging
2 centrally
funded
positions**

- Meaningful central investment and action on strategic hire has inspired additional investments to leverage the initiative
- Business *plus 2 post-doctoral fellows (PDFs) – Indigenous or Black*
- Engineering *plus up to 4 tenured/tenure-track (T/TT) positions jointly funded*
- Health Sciences *plus 1 clinical faculty position*
- Humanities *exploring additional 1-2 T/TT positions*
- Social Sciences *exploring additional T/TT positions plus EDI Professorship*
- Science *exploring additional T/TT positions and PDFs*

Insights – Lessons Learned

What has worked?

- Meaningful central investment and action on strategic hire has inspired additional investments to leverage the initiative
- A pan-Faculty invitation/opportunity is a compelling challenge Dean's want to meet and a strong unifying message
- Flexibility for Faculties to propose search processes aligned with Policies
- Engagement and Leadership of African Caribbean Faculty Association (Triage Team, Search Co-Chairs)
- Self-identification of Black/African ancestry question AND lived experience (assess representation and engagement)
- Centrality of interdisciplinary capacity notwithstanding disciplinary strength is important (ongoing dialogue)
- Holistic consideration of recruitment, retention, and recognition – of incoming and existing Black Scholars
- High touch and timely interaction with applicants who make inquiries to the Provost's Office

Insights – Lessons Learned

Where we continue to improve?

- Communication is key:
 - Between Triage Team and Faculty/Department Co-Chairs (to ensure clarity of process and involvement of ACFAM member)
 - Between Provost's Office and applicants (inquiries about status of searches)
 - Between Co-Chairs of difference search processes within and across Faculties (applicants on multiple longlists)
- Self-identification and lived experience assessment
 - Triage team with ACFAM screens applicants – soft “verification”
 - Triage team will discuss if there are issues after interviews – will cross that bridge
- Maintain centrality of interdisciplinary capacity notwithstanding disciplinary strength is important (ongoing dialogue)
- Centre priority to build capacity to contribute to AADS expansion and social justice teaching/research priorities
- Ensure programs exist to support “thriving” and that the climate is welcoming



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Inclusive Excellence in Faculty Hiring

Supporting Black Excellence Q&A

1. What is the difference between standard faculty hiring processes implemented on a day-to-day basis and strategic faculty hiring process implemented in special circumstances?

All faculty hiring processes are guided by the Faculty Recruitment & Selection [Policy](#) and companion [Handbook](#). Where a strategic faculty hiring process is introduced, like a cohort hiring initiative, there may be additional protocols to consider particular skills and competencies sought, but the process must also comply with the Policy and Handbook.

2. Do our faculty hiring practices focus on merit or excellence?

Yes. Every faculty hiring process is expected to be driven by the pursuit of excellence. Research, teaching, and service excellence are foundational to these processes and only qualified candidates are considered, advanced through these processes, and recommended for appointment.

3. Do our hiring practices promote meritocracy?

In higher education, many take the mistaken view that a *pure meritocracy* exists; however, while a commitment to the *idea* of meritocracy remains a foundational virtue, in fact, not all people are judged purely on their merit¹. A large body of research (particularly in relation to gender and racial diversity) demonstrate when we are in roles as evaluators of merit, we are all influenced by strong yet often unconscious and implicit biases. These biases adversely affect Indigenous peoples, members of racialized communities (“visible minorities”), persons with disabilities, and women through recruitment and selection processes, and have contributed to the historic and continued underrepresentation/underemployment of faculty belonging to these groups in higher education.

4. How does diversity promote excellence?

Research has demonstrated that diverse workforce and inclusive workplaces create the condition for and result in improved team and organizational performance. Diverse peoples and perspectives stimulate curiosity and innovation, which is necessary for excellent research, teaching, and service. Having a greater diversity of excellent scholars is important to reflect the increasing diversity among students and in society, to enhance inclusive teaching practices that meet diverse learning needs, and to contribute to more locally, nationally, and globally relevant and impactful research and service.

5. How is equity compatible with excellence?

Not only is equity compatible with excellence, but it is necessary to ensure we recognize and benefit from diverse talent. An equity approach acknowledges the influence of biases in creating barriers to equal opportunities. Employment equity practices help us to mitigate biases and remove barriers in recruitment and selection processes, thereby improving fairness. When we have fair and equitable hiring processes, we are better able to attract and include a broader range of excellent faculty.

¹ Stewart, A.J. & Valian, V. (2018). *An inclusive academy: Achieving diversity and excellence*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

6. What is meant by *inclusive excellence*?

When we successfully implement equity practices to engage a diverse range of talent, we refer to this as inclusive excellence². The concept of inclusive excellence recognizes that it is essential to apply an equity lens to all institutional policies and practices, to create equal opportunities for historically and currently underrepresented and underemployed groups, so that they may have equal access to and meaningfully engage in the life and work of the university. For more information on EDI and inclusive excellence, review McMaster's [EDI Strategy Brochure](#).

7. Why do we need targeted recruitment initiatives for Black students and scholars?

Targeted programs and supports for persons of Black/African descent and diaspora are needed because it is **well researched and documented** that Black peoples are among the groups in Canada who have not had equal opportunity to access employment, education and other social determinants of economic prosperity and social mobility. Barriers to equal opportunity have been a result of unconscious and implicit racial bias and systemic inequities. In fact, persons of Black/African descent and diaspora experience the greatest social inequities among racialized ("visible minority") populations in Canada. Many qualified and competitive prospective Black students and scholars are still profoundly underrepresented in higher education, not because they are not capable or competitive but because of the effects of cultural biases and systemic inequities entrenched in university recruitment practices and processes. Targeted initiatives redress the effects of biases and inequities and make room for excellent Black students and scholars who are qualified and competitive but excluded from standard recruitment practices and processes.

8. Aren't targeted initiatives unfair for non-Black students and scholars?

Targeted initiatives for Black students do not take away from the many other existing initiatives available to a diversity of students and scholars. Non-Black students are able to engage in any of the many student life, student wellness, academic success, financial aid and scholarship, and career development programs and services offered at McMaster. Non-Black faculty are represented at very high levels in the university, and they continue to have opportunities to compete in all standard hiring practices which use inclusive excellence principles.

9. Aren't targeted initiatives for Black students and scholars a form of reverse racism?

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Human Rights Act – both the highest forms of law in Canada – have long clearly stated that programs or supports put in place to ameliorate/remediate the effects of inequities for particular social groups **are not discriminatory**³. Racism refers to the adverse effects of inequities which have been systemically imbedded in our social institutions and which lead to unequal access and opportunity to groups of peoples (systemic racism).

² Williams, D.A., Berger, J.B., & McClendon, S.A. (2005). *Toward a model of inclusive excellence and change in postsecondary institutions*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

³ The Ontario Human Rights Commission has published a guidebook entitled: [Special Programs and the Ontario Human Rights Code](#) (2010/2013), which describes what and how permissible "special programs" may be developed by organizations. Specifically, under Section 14 of the Code, "it is not discrimination to put in place a program if it is designed to: relieve hardship or economic disadvantage; help disadvantaged people achieve, or try to achieve, equal opportunity, or help eliminate discrimination" (OHRC, 2013, p. 3).

10. What is systemic racism?

While explicit racial prejudice and bigotry exist, frequently discrimination happens unintentionally through micro-aggressions – everyday behaviours that individuals do not realize are harmful, but which inadvertently communicate indignities and slights that accumulate to create an unwelcoming culture and poisoned environment. These micro-aggressive behaviours result from unconscious biases and stereotypes people hold, having been socialized in a society with much misinformation about racialized communities. When racial biases inform and become imbedded in institutional policies and practices, organizational structures, and the culture, they create systems that are inequitable – this is systemic racism.

11. What resources are available if I experience retaliation for speaking about anti-Black racism?

Anti-Black racism is a community problem that requires community education and a reminder to adhere to University policies (Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities as well as the Discrimination and Harassment Policy) and the laws of the land (Human Rights Code and Criminal Code of Canada), which prohibit harassment, discrimination, and violence. It is the responsibility of the University to ensure that Black students, scholars and staff have supports and that efforts to address racism are not met with retaliation. Community members are encouraged to contact the Equity and Inclusion Office (equity@mcmaster.ca) to consult on or disclose any retaliation they experience or become aware of in person or online.

12. What can I do if I want to be an ally to address anti-Black racism and support Black Excellence?

Self-education is essential. It is important for non-racialized and non-Black persons to show humility – to appreciate the limitations of not knowing what it feels like to experience racism and to be open to learning new perspectives and information that has not been part of their awareness and education to date. It is important to lead with empathy and compassion when asking questions or responding to situations. McMaster expects respect for human rights and dignity for all members of the community.

13. What do I tell prospective students or faculty who inquire about the climate at McMaster?

McMaster is committed to supporting fostering a culture of respect and responsibility. The University will continue to undertake reviews and climate studies to better understand the experiences of the diverse campus community and to improve on our policies and programs. We will ask difficult questions and be bold in our approaches to solutions. This is an opportune time to join McMaster, to help shape a future for the University that embraces inclusive excellence – a future that recognizes that our diversity is essential to our excellence.

14. Who should I contact if I require support, education or more information?

African and Caribbean Faculty Association of McMaster (ACFAM) – support and mentorship
acfam@mcmaster.ca

- **Juliet Daniel**, Co-Chair & Professor Biology
- **Bonny Ibhawoh**, Co-Chair & Professor History
- **Jamal Deen**, Hon. Co-Chair, & Distinguished Professor Engineering
- **Daniel Coleman**, Hon. Co-Chair & Professor English & Cultural Studies
- **Lydia Kapiriri**, Lead, Black Student Mentorship Program & Associate Professor Health, Aging & Society

Please also refer to the [African & African Diaspora Studies website](#) for a list of ACFAM members

Student Affairs – student access, career support, academic success

- Senior Advisor Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism, **Clare Warner**, avpstudents@mcmaster.ca
- Student Success, Diversity Employment Coordinator, **Katherine Hesson-Bolton**,
studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca
- Student Wellness, Counsellor, **Carla Glanville**, wellness@mcmaster.ca
- Registrar's Office, Student Services Team Lead, **Faith Ogunkoya**,

Equity and Inclusion Office – consultation, education, disclosure support, complaint intake
equity@mcmaster.ca

- Senior Human Rights Officer, **Marla Brown**,
 - discrimination and harassment consultation, disclosure support, and complaint intake
- Coordinator, Anti-Black Racism Initiatives, **Tolulope Ojo**,
 - education, training, discussion groups

Human Resources Services

Employment Equity Specialist, **May-Marie Duwai-Sowa**, hr.empequity@mcmaster.ca