

## **GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group Terms of Reference**

### **Background**

At the beginning of June 2020, the Guelph Institute of Development Studies (GIDS) released a statement of solidarity that condemned the killings of Black men and women, recognised the pervasive problem of racism in both Canada and the USA, and acknowledged how systemic racism is embedded in institutions, structures and ideas, including those within the University. The GIDS Statement of Solidarity pledged to identify and address systemic racism specifically within the Institute, recognising that the goal of promoting social justice for all needs to start by identifying and addressing sources of inequity and exclusion within our own institutions.

The GIDS Statement of Solidarity is also deeply connected to the need for truth and reconciliation in the Institute's relationships with Indigenous communities within and outside the University, as well as the broader context of historical forms of racism, discrimination, and white supremacy that are deeply embedded within the broader field of development. Likewise, in June 2020 other statements of solidarity were issued by related units within the University of Guelph, including the Graduate International Development Student Association (GIDSA), the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences (CSAHS) and the Office of the President.

In order to implement the pledges included in the GIDS Statement of Solidarity, Director Craig Johnson convened a Working Group of associated faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of the Institute. The GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group began to meet at the beginning of July 2020.

### **Purpose**

The GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group acknowledges that it is part of a broader history of efforts within the University of Guelph to identify and address potential sources of racism and exclusion. There is a long history of organisation against anti-Black racism at the University of Guelph, historically led by community and student groups including OPIRG Guelph, the African Student Association, the South African Interest Group, and Black Women's Society, and the Guelph Black Students Association (formerly known as the CJ Munford Centre).<sup>1</sup> Most recently in 2015, the Guelph Black Students Association issued a list of demands to the administration to address systemic anti-Black racism at the university. In 2016, the University issued the report, "Supporting the Needs of Black Students at the University of Guelph: Report of Key Findings."<sup>2</sup> The GIDS

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<sup>1</sup> See Mina Ramos, "A History of Anti-Racist Organizing at the University of Guelph." *The Peak*. October 1, 2017. Available at: <http://peakmag.net/honouring-legacies/a-history-of-anti-racist-organizing-at-the-university-of-guelph-2/>

<sup>2</sup> "Supporting the Needs of Black Students at the University of Guelph: Report of Key Findings." May 30, 2016. Available at: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/studentexperience/system/files/Supporting%20the%20Needs%20of%20Black%20Students%20at%20the%20University%20of%20Guelph%20-%20Report%20of%20Findings.pdf>

Anti-Racism Working Group will take stock of what has, or has not, transpired as a result of these efforts and acknowledge its work as a continuation of these activities.

The GIDS Statement of Solidarity committed GIDS to addressing systemic racism within its curriculum, amplifying Black voices, identifying and creating opportunities for institutional change, supporting efforts at engagement and advocacy, and carrying out research which contributes to a more just society.

To work towards these objectives, the GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group has been established to understand the experiences of GIDS students, staff, and faculty in relation to racism within the Institute, with a particular focus on the perspectives and experiences of racialized groups within the Institute, including Black people, Indigenous people and People of Colour. After listening to experiences of GIDS community members, the purpose of the Working Group is to identify structures and processes of racism that may exist within the Institute, and make recommendations that aim to make GIDS a more inclusive, equitable, safe and anti-racist place in which to study, research, learn and work.

Specifically, the GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group will focus on these Activities:

- 1) Listening to GIDS students, alumni, staff and faculty about their experiences with racism and anti-racism;
- 2) Identifying gaps within the GIDS curriculum related to understanding racism within the field of development studies, as well as opportunities for teaching and learning around anti-racism;
- 3) Making recommendations to the GIDS Director about specific policies that could help to counter and change systemic racism within the Institute.

The final objective of the Working Group will be to write a report with its findings that will be submitted to the GIDS Director by 30 June 2021 (see “Deliverables” below).

### **Process**

The GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group is cognisant of the challenges of remotely collecting information related to the existence of systemic racism in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Working Group must be sensitive about the potential for hearing about traumatic experiences, and so must make every effort to ensure that culturally appropriate supports are in place for community members at all stages of its work. These supports may include the resources at the Guelph Black Students Association, the Office of Intercultural Affairs, the Student Support Network, and Counselling Services.

In this context, it will be necessary to employ multiple methods of listening, in order to make the Working Group's activities accessible to community members. As such, during the fall 2020 semester, the GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group will conduct an online survey that will be sent to students, alumni, staff and faculty. The purpose of the survey will be to solicit information from students, alumni, staff and faculty about their experiences of racism while they have been studying or working in GIDS, inside and outside of the classroom. It will also ask questions related to experiences of racism or exclusion related to curriculum and course content. Finally, it will ask for guidance from community members on how the Institute can provide better support and/or training in relation to anti-racism.

The survey will be followed up with a series of listening sessions that will take place during the winter 2021 semester. The questions and content of the listening sessions will be guided by the information collected through the survey. The GIDS Working Group will follow public health guidelines with regards to these listening sessions, so they will be held in-person if possible or on an online platform as an alternative. The survey and the listening sessions may be supplemented by one-on-one sessions between members of the Working Group and individuals from the GIDS community as necessary.

### **Working Group Co-Chairs**

Four GIDS community members, representing GIDS students, staff and faculty were appointed through consensus to lead the Working Group.

### **Working Group Members**

The GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group is comprised of associated faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of the Institute appointed by the GIDS Director.

### **The Working Group Members include:**

#### **Co-Chairs:**

- Lisa Blenkinsop (Staff)
- Matthew Chegahno (Student Alumnus)
- Andrea Paras (Faculty)
- Sharada Srinivasan (Faculty)

#### **Members:**

- Angela Asuncion
- Samantha Blostein
- Mary Anne Chambers
- Rosario Gomez
- Craig Johnson
- Kate Parizeau
- Matilda Ofori

- Silvia Sarapura
- Yvonne Su

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Co-Chairs**

The Co-Chairs will initiate, facilitate and coordinate the successful completion of the Working Group activities to achieve the purpose set out for the Working Group. This will include drafting the Terms of Reference, convening and facilitating Working Group meetings, reporting to Working Group members, communicating with the GIDS Director, engaging with the GIDS, CSAHS and University of Guelph community on the work of the committee, participating in and coordinating the work of the Sub-Working Groups, drafting and finalising the report and submitting it to the Director of GIDS.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Working Group Members**

The roles and responsibilities of the Working Group members include attendance at Working Group meetings, participation in Sub-Working Groups, and providing input in various activities and in the preparation of the report.

### **Sub-Working Groups and Working Arrangements**

Sub-Working groups (SWGs) will be formed as needed to address the Purpose and three principal Activities. The focus of the SWGs will include implementing the listening methods (surveys, individual and group listening sessions) and reviewing the IDS curriculum. The work of the SWGs will be central in enabling the Co-Chairs to write the Working Group report. SWG membership will draw from the Working Group. Each SWG will have one or more Leads. The Lead will be responsible for leading meetings, facilitating discussion, overseeing the work of the sub-group, providing updates to the Co-chairs and Working Group and drafting relevant sections of the final report. Each SWG will have a Co-Chair as a member. The Lead will consult directly with the Co-Chair, as required, regarding implementing the work of the committee, parameters and timelines.

### **Consultation**

The Working Group may call upon various resources, departments, and knowledge experts on campus, within the City of Guelph, and the International Development community with experience in dealing with anti-racism, equity, inclusion, diversity and human rights as needed to carry out its Purpose.

The Working Group will consult and collaborate with groups, committees and stakeholders at the University of Guelph, and the wider Guelph community, working towards eliminating systemic racism.

### **Decision-Making**

The Working Group will strive for consensus when making decisions. If consensus cannot be achieved, the Working Group members must agree on how to deal with the outstanding issue including continuing discussion of the issue, taking the issue to another meeting or voting.

### **Quorum**

Quorum will be a simple majority (50%+1) of Working Group members present at a meeting.

### **Meeting Arrangements**

The Working Group members will meet as often as necessary to meet the Purpose, on dates determined by the members. The meetings may be in-person, by teleconference or electronically, e.g. Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams will be used to store and share files amongst the Working Group members.

If a Working Group member is not able to participate in a meeting, that member can submit written comments, feedback or documentation by email to the Co-Chairs in advance so that the Co-Chairs can share the member's perspective at the meeting.

Meetings of sub-Working Groups that have been formed by the GIDS Anti-Racism Working Group may meet at any time as agreed by the subcommittee members and are in addition to the regular meetings of Working Group.

### **Confidentiality**

Working Group members who may be in attendance at Working Group meetings or privy to Working Group information acknowledge their responsibility to protect and keep confidential any protected or personal information, including that obtained through surveys and listening sessions, received through participation on the Working Group, unless such information is otherwise approved for public information. The Working Group agrees to maintain a space for the respectful and safe exchange of ideas and views.

All Working Group meeting recordings are private and not to be shared with the public.

### **Reporting**

The Working Group will report directly to the Director of the Guelph Institute of Development Studies.

### **Resources**

The Guelph Institute of Development Studies (GIDS) will provide administrative support for the Working Group, as needed. The GIDS website will be used to communicate the membership, focus, activities and progress of the Working Group to the GIDS community.

## **Deliverables**

Approval of ToR: 25 September 2020

Finalizing survey questionnaire: 30 October 2020

Survey Administration: November – December 2020

Survey results: January 2021

Curriculum Review: October – December 2020

Individual and Group Listening Sessions: January - March 2021

Draft report to working group: 31 May 2021

Final report to GIDS Director: 30 June 2021

The Working Group will deliver a summary report of its findings and recommendations to the GIDS Director by 30 June 2021.

The report will strive to make recommendations, including in the following areas:

- Curricular review and suggested updates/revisions;
- Opportunities for anti-oppression and equity training within GIDS;
- Identifying gaps in policies and practices related to admissions, hiring and recruitment in GIDS;
- Addressing gaps in culturally appropriate formal and informal supports for students (including financial and culturally appropriate counseling and mental-health services on campus to serve the mental, emotional, and psychological needs of racialized students).

The report will be shared with the GIDS community (students, staff, faculty), the CSAHS leadership (Dean and Associate Deans), University of Guelph Senior Administration and will be made publicly available on the GIDS website.