



ST. JEROME'S
UNIVERSITY
Federated with the University of Waterloo

**President's
Advisory Group on
Equity, Diversity
and Inclusion (EDI)**

**PHASE 2:
ACTION PLAN**

May 2023

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A Message from the President and Vice Chancellor

The importance of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) should be understood as foundational to the life of a Catholic university that purports to recognize the importance of social justice and the fundamental dignity of all human persons. In March 2020, Interim President Scott Kline no doubt had this in mind when he launched St. Jerome's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative. As he explained it at the time, this was to be a collaborative and consultative process, including the compilation of meaningful data as well as detailed interactions with students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders. This final report represents the culmination of the first two phases of this work.

The central recommendation in this report is for the third Phase of SJU's EDI Initiative to begin in the Fall of 2023 with the establishment of a permanent institutional committee. This committee will address the various recommendations in the report as well as the ongoing work of anti-racism, equity, inclusion, decolonization, and indigenization as it relates to the mission and life of St. Jerome's University. That EDI continues to be central to the life of our community is now also reflected in St. Jerome's new Strategic Plan, approved in April 2022, which highlights the building of an "equitable, diverse, inclusive and just community" as a key priority for our University.

This work will also seek to establish a system of accountability and reporting in line with the proper governance practices of St. Jerome's as a Catholic university and as a federated university partner of the University of Waterloo. This will include addressing any structural barriers to full and equitable inclusion; engendering a culture that values the importance of encounter, dialogue, accompaniment, and hospitality; and supporting and promoting the wellness of students, staff, faculty, and contract academic staff at the University.

My deepest thanks go out to everyone who participated in the compilation of this final report, in particular co-chairs of the Working Group Phase, Cristina Vanin and Mike Gourlay, and the chair of the Advisory Committee, Carol Ann MacGregor. For institutions as much as for individuals, change can be difficult, even unsettling. But, as part of the need to discern what Pope St. John XXIII observed at the outset of the Second Vatican Council as "the signs of the times", this report represents an important starting point for the work of dismantling, disrupting, and challenging our current practices. And in the light of the Gospel imperatives of openness, justice, and hospitality, I am confident that this work will enrich and animate our university as we strive to serve the needs of the world in the years to come.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Meehan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of a large, light-colored circular graphic element.

Peter Meehan
President and Vice Chancellor

Advisory Group Process

The President's Advisory Group was mandated to develop a comprehensive action plan to address the social and structural factors that cause members of the St. Jerome's community to be excluded, marginalized, and disregarded. Its work from April — May 2022 was focused on five areas within the University: 1) Campus Culture; 2) Hiring Systems and Practices; 3) Curriculum and Programs; 4) Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing; 5) Facilities. These areas emerged initially in the Phase 1 Report.

The Advisory Group included representatives from SJU's students, staff, and academic staff. It benefitted from the expertise of Tammy Webster, K-12 Indigenous Education and Equity Consultant, Waterloo Catholic District School Board and Director, Equity of Let's Talk Science. We were also joined by St. Jerome's University Chancellor Bruce Rodrigues. The Advisory Group was guided in its approach by a recognition that the work of anti-racism, decolonization, and reconciliation ends not with mere equity and inclusion but with liberation and a commitment that all members of our community will be honoured and cared for such that individuals and the community can thrive and flourish.

The Advisory Group recognizes that SJU's work is taking place within the context of the resources available from the University of Waterloo, especially from the UW President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART), the Office of Indigenous Relations, and the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism. We are grateful for the ongoing support from our colleagues at the University of Waterloo and seek to be partners in this work. We have sought, where possible, to ground our work specifically in the PART Report issued by the University of Waterloo in Spring 2022. As the University of Waterloo is a signatory of the Scarborough Charter on anti-Black racism and Black inclusion, St. Jerome's University seeks to contribute to those commitments as a federated partner.

The Advisory Group recommends that the proposed Phase 3 of SJU's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative begin in Fall 2023 and that the President form a permanent institutional committee to take up the recommendations in this report and to address other initiatives related to the ongoing work of anti-racism, equity, inclusion, decolonization, and indigenization. This group should be tasked with ongoing assessment, including establishing a system of accountability and periodic reporting sensitive to appropriate data collection and governance practices.

The Action Plans outlined in the next section of the report reflect a starting place—5 goals, with 25 specific recommendations, that, if achieved, would dramatically improve the culture and climate of St. Jerome's University for all who live on, work at, and interact with our campus. Achieving these goals would lay the foundation for additional work and initiatives that will emerge as the world around us and students we serve continue to change.

The Action Plans reference our University of Waterloo partner's President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report, released in April 2022. We have identified where shared themes are aligned with this report and the University of Waterloo's.

Action Plans

- **Campus Culture**
- **Hiring Systems and Practices**
- **Curriculum and Programming**
- **Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing**
- **Facilities and Land**

Action Plans

Campus Culture

Goal

Ensure the SJU campus is one where all people feel welcome, supported, and able to flourish and where commitments to anti-racism, equity, inclusion, and reconciliation are deeply embedded into the ongoing work of the institution.

Objectives / Actions

1. Ensure that equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism and decolonization training are part of the orientation and ongoing professional development of SJU co-registered and residential students, staff, faculty, senior leaders and the Board of Governors. Planning and assessment of these initiatives that includes involvement from key stakeholders, including students, is an important component of this commitment. Additionally, this should be a consideration in the procurement process for external contractors.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 5 – Training, Recommendation #6

2. Foster internal resources and external relationships in the Kitchener-Waterloo community to build capacity for success in this collective work in ways that acknowledge perspectives and talents currently underrepresented on campus.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 4 – Engagement, Recommendation #5

3. Develop communication practices that are transparent, relational, and accessible, and that demonstrate the University's ongoing commitment and action on behalf of equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, decolonization, healing, and reconciliation.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 7 – Communication, Recommendation #8

4. Refine and further develop the policies, processes, and mechanisms for reporting and seeking a resolution to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racist concerns for students and staff, including a review of how Policy 33 (Ethical Behaviour) is implemented at St. Jerome's University.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 1 – Policy Review, Recommendation #1

5. Institutionalize the commitments made in this report through the creation of a standing committee that is broadly representative and will be accountable for the holistic work of this plan and other initiatives related to this ongoing series of commitments.

Action Plans

Hiring Systems and Practices

Goal

Develop hiring systems and practices that are fair and equitable, anti-racist and anti-oppressive, transparent, and accountable and update policies and practices accordingly.

Objectives / Actions

6. Require equity, diversity and inclusion and anti-racism training on inclusive hiring practices for all members of SJU hiring committees, including for recruiting student leaders and Board members.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 5 – Training Recommendation, and Recommendation #80

7. Determine appropriate ways to interview faculty candidates about how equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and decolonization will be addressed in the classroom and incorporated into course material.

8. Determine appropriate ways to interview staff candidates about how they can contribute to equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and decolonization in the role they are applying for.

9. Develop student hiring practices that are fair, transparent, and accessible to all students.

10. Ensure improvements in hiring systems and practices are matched with programs that ensure racialized and equity-deserving faculty and staff are supported in their work and retained at the university.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Professional and Academic Development and Mentorship - Responsibility #2, Recommendation #62; Responsibility #5, Recommendation #71

Action Plans

Curriculum and Programming

Goal

Foster an ongoing commitment to training in best practices and inclusive pedagogies to ensure students experience courses with topics and authors that represent all voices and perspectives and student affairs programming is appropriately inclusive.

Objectives / Actions

11. Make equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization and Indigeneity training and professional development available to staff and develop mechanisms for requiring this training for all faculty and staff.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 5 – Training, Recommendation #6

12. Adopt or adapt the PART Report recommended anti-racism statement for course syllabi at St. Jerome's.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Code of Conduct and Safety - Responsibility #3, Recommendation #1

13. Acknowledge that a “nothing about us, without us” approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion work may require engaging UW resources and other external experts to provide additional support for those seeking to review, revise, and update their curriculum and pedagogies or working to develop extra or co-curricular programs.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 5 – Training Recommendation; Educational Environment and the Development of Learners, Responsibility 1-3, Recommendations #16

14. Determine how best to foster equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, decolonization, healing and reconciliation in all SJU experiential and service-learning programs and student leadership programs.

15. Ensure that students, staff, and faculty are aware of supports and the formal mechanisms available for grievances that are available to students at SJU, UW and the broader KW community to deal with experiences of exclusion, racism, and oppression. Develop such mechanisms if they are not already in place.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 1 – Policy Review, Recommendation #1

Action Plans

Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing

Goal

Develop an outreach, recruitment and marketing plan that reaches a diverse pool of prospective students and helps to make SJU a place where all students see themselves reflected and welcomed.

Objectives / Actions

16. Develop communication messages and stories about SJU's identity and mission as a Catholic university that ensure that all prospective students are welcomed and have a sense of belonging, support, and justice.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Theme 7 – Communications, Recommendation #8

17. Develop, enhance, and expand outreach strategies to target high schools and other stakeholders with a variety of equity-deserving student populations.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Educational Environment and Development of Learners - Responsibility 5-6, Recommendation #27

18. Enhance admissions strategies to ensure SJU is meeting the needs of all prospective students, especially students from equity-deserving communities.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Educational Environment and Development of Learners - Responsibility 5-6, Recommendation #27

19. Ensure that prospective students, parents, supporters, and guidance counsellors are aware of SJU's personalized admissions support and ongoing supports for students when they live and study at SJU.

20. Ensure that adequate attention is paid to supporting students post-arrival on campus by living out the commitments outlined in the section of this report on curriculum and programming.

Action Plans

Facilities and Land

Goal

Examine and improve ways in which SJU can ensure that students, staff, and faculty experience all campus spaces and buildings as places where they are welcomed, included, and supported.

Objectives / Actions

21. Determine concrete ways in which we can honour the land on which we live, work, teach and learn, and celebrate our diverse cultures, spiritualities, and stories (e.g., artwork; the naming of buildings and spaces).

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Educational Environment and Development of Learners - Responsibility #3, Recommendation #20

22. Learn about the unique safety and wellness needs of various equity-deserving groups, and ensure all SJU physical and digital spaces are safe and accessible and consider creating dedicated spaces for healing.

University of Waterloo President's Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) Report: Health and Mental Health - Responsibility #3, Recommendation #36

23. Ensure that the SJU campus is minimally fully AODA compliant (including online/digital resources) and that, wherever possible, this standard is exceeded.

24. Ensure that everyone who comes onto the SJU campus is aware of the history and meaning of the land on which SJU is situated. This could include adopting a St. Jerome's University Land Acknowledgement with guidelines for individuals who are interested in preparing land acknowledgements that are honest and meaningful.

25. Provide locations on campus where students can use various forms of art to represent themselves and the diversity of their experiences.

President's Working and Advisory Groups on EDI

Working Group

Phase 1: Preparatory Work For The Action Plan

Co-Chairs

- Mike Gourlay, Executive Director, Finance and Administration
- Cristina Vanin, Interim Vice President Academic and Dean

Staff Members

- John Arnou, Director, Student Affairs (Acting)
- Veronica Austen, Associate Dean
- Sue Brubacher, Director, Enrolment and Upper Year Transition
- Martha Fauteux, Director, Campus Ministry
- Michelle Watson, Director, Human Resources

Faculty Members

- Carm DeSantis, Lecturer, Department of Sexuality, Marriage and Family Studies
- Denise Whitehead, Associate Professor, Department of Sexuality, Marriage and Family Studies

Student Members

- Eve Astolfi
- Jenny Fu
- Leslie Moss

Advisory Group

Phase 2: Development Of Action Plan

Co-Chairs

- Carol Ann MacGregor, Vice President Academic and Dean
- Saphron Moule, Executive Director, Finance and Administration

Staff Members

- Michelle Metzger, Service Learning Program Coordinator
- Jessica Vorsteveld, Director, Student Affairs

External Members

- Bruce Rodrigues, Chancellor, St. Jerome's University
- Tammy Webster, K-12 Indigenous Education and Equity Consultant, Waterloo Catholic District School Board and Director, Equity of Let's Talk Science

Faculty Members

- Diana Lobb, Contract Academic Staff, Department of English
- Anastasia Tataryn, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Legal Studies

Student Members

- Jasleen kaur Brar
- Jenny Fu
- Leslie Moss

Appendix 1 - Advisory Group Notes

- Campus Culture
- Hiring Systems and Practices
- Curriculum and Programming
- Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing
- Facilities and Land

APPENDIX 1: Advisory Group Notes

Appendix 1: Advisory Group Notes highlight the key speaking points discussed during meetings held by the President’s Advisory Group on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. These notes provide background context and insight that resulted in the development of the content detailed in the Phase 2: Action Plan (2022).

Campus Culture

Communication

- Transparency, willingness to listen and accept critique.
- Using different ways to make communication accessible, personal, and relational.
- Communicating to students the University’s support of them and what they care about.
- Communicating how the university uses public platforms:
- Social media – figuring out what this looks like for SJU to support social justice initiatives.
- Communication plan – how we attend to EDI and social justice concerns on social media.

Relationships

- Relationships and wellbeing.
- Feeling of being welcome and belonging, identifying, and removing barriers to belonging.
- Addressing the “us vs them” mentality between the students and the institution – fixing this relationship.
- Shared meanings and values across the university (what are they, do we share them, what needs to be changed).
- Showing support for students.
- Creating a space for students to create respectful and constructive dialogue – mentoring students how to raise the issues they are concerned about respectfully.
- Collaborating with students on student support initiatives.
- Addressing stratification between staff, faculty, students – flattening the hierarchical organizational structure.

Accountability

- Meaningful reconciliation process from the institution (something accessible to students).
- Using restorative justice processes throughout all areas of the university.
- Transparent policies and procedures.
- Naming the body that is accountable for ensuring that the actions in the action plan are completed – task someone with overseeing this and keeping the university accountable.
- Policies and procedures – to provide transparent and informed processes for decision making.

Student Activities and Culture

- Break down barriers to inclusion, making the student community more accessible and welcoming to more students.
- More staff/faculty involvement to create objectivity in hiring of student leaders.

Culture of Inclusion/Creating an Inclusive Space

- Creation of a “loop back/feedback system” – checking in with the different areas and people to make sure the desired outcomes are being achieved.
- Diverse representations of Christ, icons, and symbols.
- Representation of other religions – put into the foreground around the university.
- Acknowledging stories from different perspectives (not just the Catholic perspective).
- Working with students to build a stronger community through collaborating on student support initiatives – resources and funding:
- University being more involved in student lead initiatives/supports.
- Supporting students through vocal/visual solidarity through the use of open discourse platform (instead of constant social media posts), with resources/fundraising/monetary supports for their concerns.

Hiring Systems and Practices

Utilize EDI consulting firms to determine where to post job advertisements and how to recruit a diverse pool of applicants.

- Shaping language and hiring practices to not resolicit unconscious biases.
- As a starting point make sure we are aligned with the training that the University of Waterloo (UW) requires.
- HR systems and processes – highlight retention as well, looking at equity practices as well.
- Onboarding practices.
- Evaluating and getting the perspectives of those we hire.
- Fair assessment of lived experiences, looking at people’s skill sets and how they fit into the community.
- Utilizing consultants to help us – work has already been done that we can utilize.
- Clearly defining when we would use consultants (possibly by creating policies).

Require EDI and anti-racism training for all members of SJU hiring committees.

- Reporting/grievance process – setting up a system including EDI concerns for non-unionized staff and students (research systems already in place – collective agreement).
- Ensuring inclusivity is also highlighted (not just diversity).
- Hiring team should know and understand the job description as part of the hiring process (would help guide the process).
- Reviewing current job descriptions.
- Ensuring that hiring is an integrated process – reflecting on the position and how it fits within the department (not just hiring but beyond).
- The right “fit” for SJU – problematic language, shifting from the right “fit” to enhancement and alignment.
- Catholic identity – presents a unique challenge, talk about our Catholicity focusing on inclusivity: acknowledgement of collective wrongs of the past and the depth of the problem, emphasize that we are trying to do better (acknowledgement, discussion, put into the forefront).
- Become a leader in advocacy.
- Board recruitment processes.
- Student hiring practices:
 - Fully consider soft skills of different students, not just trying to fit a certain mold.
 - More involvement of staff in the student hiring process – create a more objective fair process.
 - Making leadership roles more accessible for students that are not outgoing, etc.
 - Cliques – find a way to stop their development from happening.
 - More training (and more oversight) for student leaders who are mentors and provide feedback to other leaders - interpersonal skills and encouragement.

Determine appropriate ways to interview faculty candidates about how EDI will be addressed in the classroom and incorporated into course material.

- Trying to fix the system, parallel with diversifying – hiring these voices to help us to change our systems, and making this known:
- Bringing in different voices and perspectives to bring systemic change.
- Looking at current processes and policies, support and culture to address current inequitable practices.
- Accountability – ensure that there are processes in place.
- Supporting individuals once they have been hired/come to SJU:
- Supports for families of individuals who have come from other places/outside of Canada.

Metrics

- UW equity survey – SJU has access to the SJU specific results/data.
- Looking beyond surface data – looking at the systems (measuring these systems).
- Ensuring training for the different committees.
- Policies and procedures – ensuring they have been reviewed using an EDI lens.
- Community feedback system.
- Including feedback collection in already established processes/systems.
- Revisiting the survey questions from Phase 1.
- Feedback collection methods (surveys, focus groups, etc.)

Timelines

- Think about prioritizing within the timeline (short, medium, long term).
- Short term goal – possibly pilot the student experience survey to recent student leaders and use those results to help integrate results into SAT training (and other student leader training).

Curriculum and Programs

Understand what barriers students are experiencing in the classroom.

- Gathering information on work that is being done in this area outside of this group (SJU, UW, other universities).
- Use student survey to understand how students have been experiencing campus services and what we should be providing moving forward.
- Ensuring faculty are aware of available campus services to assist students.
- Making training available to instructors (CTE resources).
- Increasing engagement amongst faculty and staff in utilizing resources.

Focus on decolonization from a content, pedagogy & classroom management perspective and how those relate together.

- Bringing in EDI and Indigeneity/decolonizing experts who can help faculty think through how our courses can be taught, reimagined, and experienced by students through an EDI lens and how any new curriculum and programming can be conceived of and envisioned through an EDI and Indigeneity / decolonization lens.
- Implementing requirements for staff and faculty professional development related to EDI and decolonization (specific training around working at a Catholic institution).
- Engaging racialized groups in oversight of course content at SJU.
- Ensuring Academic Plan captures the recommendations of this group.

Determine how best to foster EDI and Indigeneity/decolonization in all SJU experiential and service-learning programs.

- Building partnerships to ensure all students have the supports they need.
- Exploring options and feasibility for specific EDI supports at SJU.
- Training for incoming students.

Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing

Marketing

Continue strengthening marketing message to align further with the upcoming Strategic Plan, with a particular focus on SJU's mission and identity.

- Clearly reflect the concept SJU's mission and identity as a Catholic university should ensure that all prospective and current students experience belonging, support, and justice in their university experience.
- Reflect the diversity of our campus in all communication with students.
- Expressing the value of a Liberal Arts education (specifically to individuals new to Canada), show as practical and emphasize the type of employment that can be achieved with this education.

Outreach (high school, grades 9 – 11)

Develop and enhance outreach strategies that target high schools (grades 9 - 11) with a diverse racialized student population.

- Building partnerships with stakeholders outside of high schools that focus on racialized students e.g. CICS Youth Centre.
- Going to more diverse places to reach potential students, reach out to people where they live, not just where they go to school (community locations, places of worship, etc.).
- Tailoring outreach/recruitment to more diverse communities:
- Explore the way we conduct our outreach and recruitment, change our mindset to reach more diverse people (avoid the use of the colonial mindset).
- Thinking about other equity deserving folks (not just racialized individuals) within our outreach:
- Students who are the first in their families to go to university, 2SLGBTQ+, students with disabilities, mature students etc.
- Added challenge is that we need to ensure that there are supports in place for these individuals when they arrive.
- Lowering our target audience (grade 8) to encourage reach out to catch individuals who may not continue on with their education because of racialized identity, low income, etc.
- Developing and utilizing summer programs to bring marginalized students to campus with a long-term goal of getting them interested to apply and be academically prepared.
- First and main goal is outreach/recruitment/service not revenue generating.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Develop and implement new scholarships and bursaries to support racialized students.

- Collaborating with Advancement to create scholarships and bursaries that are specific to racialized students.
- Developing a bursary that supports non-Arts SJU students who have financial barriers to accessing residence and/or meal plans.
- Making scholarships and bursaries more accessible.
- Putting in place processes to ensure their needs are met and students know what opportunities they have to help them succeed (specifically those students who are transferring, mature students, students outside of the first-year guarantee, etc.)..

Facilities and Land

Providing welcoming space where it is encouraged for staff, students, and faculty to meet together.

- Gender neutral washrooms (we only have them in residence and SJ2). Only baby changing table is in a female washroom.
- Menstrual products – how are we making these free and accessible across campus?
- Washrooms are typically sterile and can be very unsafe vs. having access to a full washroom (research from Laurier). Getting rid of metal doors and individual locks. Stigma of going into a washroom.

Ensure fully accessible campus.

- Including online/digital resources (consider compliance vs. an inclusive experience for everyone).
- Facility equity audit for first year students, collecting feedback regularly on how our spaces are being used.
- Wayfinding on campus – Make our campus easy to navigate and a place where people feel welcome.

Develop guidelines on how SJU should be doing land acknowledgements and honouring the land we work on.

- Creating something permanent/on display on campus/interactive signage?
- Ensuring everyone on our campus is aware of the land we are on and its history. How do we understand relationships better and integrate them into how we acknowledge the land we are on? Can we make our spaces available for smudging and easily accessible for this?
- Art – can we arrange exhibitions from community groups to celebrate their work? Can we celebrate the diversity of our community through art on our campus?



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