

Increasing the Representation of Black Faculty Members at York: Report and Recommendations by the Joint Subcommittee of Employment Equity and Inclusivity.

Submitted to JCOAA on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## **1. PURPOSE AND PEOPLE INVOLVED:**

The Joint Sub-Committee on Employment Equity and Inclusivity has been charged with providing recommendations to the JCOAA on how best to increase the number of Black faculty members at York University. As an outcome of the 2018 negotiations between York University and YUFA, the Joint Subcommittee on Equity and Inclusivity was struck with a mandate to make recommendations on how the University can most effectively increase the representation of Black faculty at York. The members of the committee were: Enakshi Dua (YUFA [Y] co-chair), Sarah Barrett (Employer [E] co-chair), Gamal Abdel-Shehid (Y), Pablo Idahosa (Y), Mazyar Fallah (E), Rebecca Pillai Riddell (E). The University's Affirmative Action Officer Carl James and Equity Diversity and Inclusion Officer Annette Boodram also advised the committee.

The committee met on four dates; May 1, 2019, September 25, 2019, October 30, 2019 and November 13, 2019.

## **2. PROCESS**

### **Data Collection**

We began by reviewing the numbers of Black faculty at York University, as well as data on Black faculty in Canadian Universities. All of these data demonstrated a pattern of underrepresentation of Black faculty at York University as well as across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

### **Affirmative Action (AA) Processes**

In assessing the need for such a program, we discussed York's current AA program; with its focus on the aggregate category of visible minorities insufficiently robust. Thus, while it may be increasing the aggregate representation of visible minorities, it is less successful in providing support and removing barriers for hiring Black applicants. Our discussions highlight the need for developing a hiring program that targets Black faculty. It also points to the importance of looking more closely at the current AA processes.

### **Identification of cognate models**

The committee identified other universities attempting to ameliorate the low numbers of Black faculty and identified a few cognate models. We also reviewed CRC equity initiatives. In our discussion we assessed these existing models as not appropriate for the York University environment.

### **3. CONTEXT**

York University is situated in one of the most racially diverse regions in the country, with a student population that reflects this diversity. Data indicate that 7.5% of Torontonians (3.4% of Canadians) are Black and 12% of York students that come from the Toronto District School Board are Black (See Appendix 1). However, the full-time faculty complement is not reflective of these proportions. According to a self-identification survey conducted by the University, Black faculty in the university make up only 2.3% of the faculty complement (see Appendix 2). Moreover, much of the Black Faculty are appointed to LAPS, with three Faculties having no Black Faculty<sup>1</sup>.

#### *Affirmative Action and Employment Equity Policies at York University*

York University currently has several programs designed to facilitate equity, diversity, and inclusion. With respect to racialized people, there is the Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion (which

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<sup>1</sup> Data Analysis collected from York University's Employment Equity Self-Identification Forms effective November 2019

provides workshops and an outlet for complaints and conflict resolution), a YUFA Affirmative Action, Equity, Inclusivity Officer, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer in the Human Resources Department. YUFA also has a Race Equity Caucus whose Chair sits on the Steward's Council. Also, a new position, VP of Equity, People and Culture, was recently created by the University.

With respect to hiring, the University has had an Affirmative Action committee since 1985. Currently, York University is subject to the Federal Contractor's Program and must implement employment equity policies related to the four designated groups (women, Aboriginal (Indigenous), disabled, and visible minority (racialized)). For faculty, the AA program in the collective agreement focuses on women (aiming for 40%) and visible minorities (aiming for 25%). However, because the AA program operates on aggregate thresholds, a unit could potentially meet the threshold without having any representation of Black faculty. Indeed, with all of the programs and policy that have been put in place, as the University began to collect disaggregated data on visible minorities in 2018, it has become clear that Black faculty remain underrepresented.

#### *Challenges Encountered by Black Faculty that Need to Be Taken Into Account*

In our discussion, there was concern that once Black faculty are hired – they face a number of challenges. Based on our discussions of notable exemplars of research on this topic (for example, Cote-Meeks 2014, Davis & Brown 2017, Griffin et al. 2013, Modica & Mamiseishvil 2010, Parsons et al. 2018, Smith & Hawkins 2011), a list of challenges was generated:

1. Workload
  - a. Black faculty tend to be asked to serve on more committees to provide broad representation
  - b. Mentoring Black faculty
  - c. Higher expectations for mentorship of Black students
  - d. Teaching and supervisory load

## 2. Psychosocial Factors / Race Tax

- a. Likelihood that their scholarship will be devalued
- b. “ethnostress”<sup>2</sup>
- c. Isolation – Single faculty member in a unit
- d. Lack of mentorship<sup>3</sup>
- e. Lack of representation and bias training in T&P adjudication

### **Recommendations:**

#### **1. HIRING NEW FACULTY**

##### **Recommendation 1: Six Targeted Hires over the course of the current collective agreement**

Rationale: We noted that while longer term goals must include better understanding barriers Black applicants face in gaining faculty positions, we recommend the short-term goal is to initiate a program that hires six new Black faculty over the course of the current collective agreement. Such a program would substantially increase the number of Black faculty at York, helping to reduce isolation for current and future hires. We recommend that the university commit to the appointment of at least six Black candidates to start on or before July 1, 2023. The following suggested action items support this recommendation:

- We recommend that the Provost and Vice-President provide incentive funding to Faculties to incentivize the six recommended appointments. We recommend these hires receive incentive funding similar to the Program for Recruitment of Aboriginal (Indigenous) Faculty and Librarians,

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<sup>2</sup> Cote-Meeks documents the ways in which Black and Indigenous peoples are constantly exposed to the lack of acknowledgement of their histories and covert and overt discrimination (Cote-Meeks 2014, p 27)

<sup>3</sup> Both from other more experienced Black faculty and others - there may be an assumption that the only appropriate mentor for a Black faculty member is another Black faculty member, but this is not necessarily the case

and units that wish to make a Black faculty hire apply to this pool <sup>4</sup>. As we noted the data illustrates that several faculties do not have a Black faculty member, we recommend attempts be made to distribute these new hires across faculties.

- In deciding which units should receive these positions, we strongly recommend that a criteria of 'readiness' be applied<sup>5</sup>.
- Until a review of the AA policy has taken place, hiring committees use York's procedures and guidelines for the Canada Research Chairs program to recruit and encourage Black candidates to apply for existing positions

## 2. UPDATE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROCESS

### **Recommendation 2: Review, revise and update current AA processes at York**

Rationale: As we noted above, a Black faculty hire program is an interim measure designed to address the underrepresentation of Black faculty at York. This measure needs to be combined with a long-term plan that addresses such underrepresentation. In developing a long-term plan we recommend a review of the AA policy, with the intent to update it to more adequately reflect current patterns of underrepresentation. We recommend a review process begin through JCAA before July 1, 2021 that contextualizes our process in the larger national processes working towards equity, diversity, and inclusion ([EDI] e.g. Canada Research Chairs Program Secretariat, Dimensions Program). Suggested action items for this process that will support the hiring of Black faculty in the future are:

- Disaggregate the self-id form for hiring
- Review and revise the AA program incorporating disaggregation

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<sup>4</sup> Memorandum for a Renewal Collective Agreement Oct. 16, 2018

<sup>5</sup> For example, in some universities in the United States, units making an equity hire are required to show what steps they have taken to ensure that the hire is made in an environment that is welcoming, does not isolate the new hire, and is able to provide supports to mitigate the challenges described above.

- Review and revise processes for choosing AA representatives on hiring committees, ensuring people selected are actually invested in support EDI.

### **3. BUILDING THE PIPELINE**

**Recommendation 3: It is critical to enhance the channels through which the pool of potential Black candidates is built.**

In our assessment, addressing the underrepresentation of Black faculty at York also requires addressing challenges in the pathways by which Black students become prepared to be faculty members. Our discussions noted that the available pool of applicants is inconsistent across disciplines and departments. We also noted the research that shows that Black graduate students find it harder to get supervision and funding, and thus may be at a disadvantage in the academic job market. Thus, providing better supports for Black graduate students at York is an important aspect of increasing our Black faculty compliment. Suggested action items to support this recommendation are:

- Create fellowships for high-achieving Black students in undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Develop a targeted post-doctoral program
- Undertake a full census of the student and faculty populations in order to determine if they are underrepresented, and if so, in which Faculties. This census should be based on disaggregated self-identification data.
- Establish formal mentoring of black graduate students to encourage and prepare them for faculty positions.

### **4. ENHANCE RETENTION EFFORTS**

**Recommendation 4: Increasing supports of Black faculty who are hired**

In addition to the challenges faced by Black faculty outlined above, a number of the recommendations above will contribute to increased workload for Black faculty members (e.g. mentoring program, representation on hiring committees, university committees to support review/change in the AA program).

- We recommend establishing a central pool of funding for course release for Black faculty who can demonstrate a higher than normal workload due to mentorship and service.
- Create time and space for Black faculty across campus to meet and support each other.
- Create a university-wide Black faculty mentoring program

#### Acknowledgement of Authorship

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## Appendix 1: Racial identity, access and graduation (2000-2012)

		Who goes to York?	Who graduates? (Grad rates)
		Total	Total
Combined Racial Information	Black	12.1%	49.6%
	East Asian	16.3%	65.1%
	Latin American	1.6%	56.9%
	Middle Eastern	7.8%	56.5%
	Mixed	4.9%	58.6%
	South Asian	27.5%	62.3%
	Southeast Asian	4.4%	58.5%
	White	25.3%	64.2%
	Total	100.0%	60.8%

Gillian Parekh, Robert S. Brown & Carl E. James (2020)

Appendix 2

**YUFA AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DATA**  
Effective November 2019

1. Total York Faculty (includes CLA's) – **1439**
2. Total Surveys Not Submitted – **136**
3. Total number of YUFA Faculty who returned the survey and chose not to respond to the questions on the survey- **56**
4. Employment Equity Self-Identification Survey Return Rate –  $1303/1439*100 = 90.5\%$
5. Returned the survey and chose not to respond to the questions on the survey rate –  $56/1439*100 = 3.9\%$

%	Women	Aboriginal (Indigenous) People	Visible Minority (Racialized Groups)	Persons with Disabilities	Arab	Black	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Non-White Latin American	South Asian West Indian	Non- White West Asian	South East Asian	Mixed Origin
York Statistics	42.5	1.4	22.7	8.5	1.4	2.3	4.1	0.2	0.6	0.9	5.0	3.4	0.6	0.6	1.7
Statistics Canada (National - All) 2016	48.2	4.0	21.3	9.1	1.5	3.4	4.5	2.2	0.3	0.5	1.3	5.5	0.8	0.9	0.7
Statistics Canada (CMA Toronto - All) 2016	51.5	0.8	48.8		1.8	7.5	10.6	4.3	0.3	1.2	2.2	16.4	2.1	1.4	1.6
*Professors (NOC 4011) National 2019	44.0	1.4	21.1	8.9 (EEOG Professional)											
*Professors (NOC 4011) CMA Toronto 2019	45.9	0.8	30.9												

\* Employment and Social Development Canada does not provide CMA-Toronto for Person with Disability and does not break down NOC (National Occupational Code) for the groups that are greyed out above

1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/labour-standards/reports/employment-equity-data-report-2016.html#aC>
2. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=535&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&SearchText=toronto&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1&type=0>