

## Dr. Akolisa (Ako) Ufodike Statement

My name is Ako Ufodike. I am an Assistant Professor in Auditing in the School of Administrative Studies. I am also appointed to the Graduate Program in Public Policy and Law. I am a Black Canadian of African descent, who came to Canada as an immigrant over 20 years ago.

Between 2006 and 2008, I served on the board of the Black Business and Professionals Association and in 2014, I was recognized by my peers in the accounting profession as a Fellow of the Chartered Professional Accountants Association. I have designed accounting courses that were taught exclusively to Canada's First Nations in partnership with the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association. In my approach to accounting education, I strive to be a positive influence on all my students inside (as an instructor) and outside (as a mentor) of the classroom. I tap into the challenges I've experienced and overcome, including as a member of an Equity-seeking group, to encourage all my students to face their education with a positive and confident attitude.

As a Doctoral student, my background as a Black African from a developing country subliminally informed my ontology and ultimately led me to the site of my dissertation study (between 2011 and 2014) which was a First Nations community in Alberta. My research found that First Nations employees at the health center operate as a Common Pool Institution and enforce a network form of accountability in healthcare. More recently, In August 2020, I co-authored an article in [The Conversation titled Corporate Diversity Targets Could Help Dismantle Systemic Racism](#). It discusses how the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) – one of the leading organizations representing board members in Canada and globally – could contribute to achieving diversity on boards. That work has now been evolved into a research program focused on the intersectionality of discrimination and accounting and business research.

I have co-authored a structured literature review entitled *The Sociology of Exclusion* that conducts a knowledge synthesis of discrimination research in accounting. This is now under consideration with the *Accounting Perspectives Journal* and I have applied to the SSHRC Race and Gender Initiative to support this project. My goal with this project is to apply tools that were effective in furthering gender diversity on Canadian boards to racialized communities.

My perspective is that policy positions that help achieve equity, diversity and inclusion are a natural extension of my research program on accountability and is well suited for a researcher with my world views and lived experiences. The social justice climate of 2020 was impactful in illuminating exclusion in post-secondary institutions and broader Canadian society, as part of a broader public discussion about the reality of anti-Black racism in our society. To achieve, inclusion, and challenge all forms of oppression we know exists at the University, we must act on the new knowledge we've acquired. In that regard, I believe YUFA's Equity Officers must seek Institutional accountability regarding the aspirations of York's [Indigenous](#) and [anti-Black racism](#) frameworks and the [principles and values](#) of our Institution.

Perhaps most crucially, I bring my lived experiences as a Black Canadian and my longstanding engagement with First Nations communities to reflect on my academic practice and professional conduct and would draw on these insights in my role as one of YUFA's Equity Officers. I act with sensitivity on all issues that make us different as people. I believe that this approach of mutual respect helps foster an environment where the exchange of ideas can be done in a mutually respectful and collegial environment.

Especially now, as post-secondary institutions across Canada come to terms with systemic anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, we need to help make our unions and other bodies more representative of the communities they aim to serve and ensure that all voices are heard and supported. I believe I could play a constructive role in helping achieve these goals as part of YUFA's Executive Committee, and in making our community a welcoming space for all its members. And that's why I'm standing for election to the Equity Officer position with YUFA.