Kwantlen Polytechnic University's

Task Force on Anti-Racism

Final Report and Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 7, 2022

KPU

Territorial Acknowledgement

Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) is situated on the unsurrendered territories of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples.

KPU proudly shares the name of the Kwantlen First Nation; the word 'Kwantlen' means 'Tireless Runner' and is reflected in the university's motto: "through tireless effort, knowledge, and understanding." This reminds us of the persistence and strength required to move forward in good ways.

Territorial acknowledgements are an important reminder of the protocols that govern these territories, of our responsibilities, and of the necessity of acting in right relationship with both peoples and lands. The Task Force on Anti-Racism (TFA) hopes that this *Final Report and Recommendations* brings us closer to these goals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KPU's Task Force on Anti-Racism (TFA) is excited to present this *Final Report and Recommendations* after nearly two years of deliberations and consultations within and beyond KPU, surveys, research and literature reviews, and data analysis. We hope that the findings highlight the need for ongoing anti-racism work and the benefits of building and sustaining anti-racist institutions. We further hope that the recommendations function as both a call to action and a guide that will help the KPU community take ongoing, meaningful steps to transform our institution.

The TFA was established in July 2020. During the first three meetings after its formation, TFA members agreed on the following mandate:

- To create institutional supports for the KPU community for teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and institutional change on racial equity, systemic oppression, and intersectional social justice
- To consult with the KPU community to examine and develop ways to eliminate systemic barriers at KPU
- To create spaces for the KPU community to share their lived experiences, knowledge, research, creativity, and teaching resources related to confronting racism and promoting intersectional social justice
- To draft an institutional anti-racism policy, procedures, and guidelines
- To research existing KPU strategies, policies, investments, resources, and practices, and recommend improvements to further the goals of anti-racism
- To equip allies to be effective in furthering racial equity, thereby reducing the burden of work traditionally left to Black peoples, Indigenous peoples, and People of Colour

Over the course of two years, the TFA discussed policies, data collection processes, survey designs, complaints processes, institutional structures and barriers, hiring and retention processes, and many other issues. The TFA also offered ten workshops and panel discussions for KPU students and employees. Each of these sessions was attended by 40 to 80 participants.

The TFA affirms that historic and ongoing racism exists within and beyond KPU, that it is systemic, and that it negatively impacts all aspects of the university's operations and activities. This racism is rooted in intersectional systems of oppression including (but not limited to) white supremacy, capitalism, and settler colonialism, and it operates at individual, institutional, and societal levels. Our work has confirmed that racism does not impact all members of the KPU community the same way; its effects are mitigated and exacerbated by numerous other factors, including, but not limited to gender, sexuality, ability, age, socioeconomic class, religion, culture, and language. For this reason, the TFA has adopted an intersectional lens when examining and addressing racism.

Anti-racism work cannot be done without challenging the colonial context in which universities have historically operated. All anti-racism work must be done within a decolonial framework and in consultation with Indigenous communities and Elders. As such, the TFA's *Final Report and Recommendations* should work in alignment with KPU's *xéʔelɬ - Pathways to Systemic Transformation* document.

Racial justice initiatives also need to pay attention to equity, diversity, and inclusion work and must be done in consultation with Black, Indigenous, People of Colour – BIPOC (also, identified as IBPOC or People of the Global Majority) individuals and communities. As such, the TFA's *Final Report and Recommendations* should work in alignment with the recommendations that will be presented by *KPU's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID) Action Plan* (under development, 2022).

The TFA categorically acknowledges current research from higher-education institutions, non-governmental and non-profit organizations, think tanks, and activist movements which cautions against the risks of allowing anti-racism initiatives to be subsumed by Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives. Many scholars and activists whose work focuses on anti-racist and decolonial practices have argued that EDI does not equal anti-racism, and that racial justice needs to be a central tenet of all equity work in our institutions. While EDI initiatives can open space for discussions about inequities, they should not become "a containment zone" (Thobani 6). The risk of framing anti-racism within EDI is that it diversifies without paying attention to racial justice. KPU must ensure this does not happen in the implementation of the recommendations of this report.

The TFA has divided the recommendations presented in this *Report* thematically. Below are eleven themes that contain sixty-four recommendations which will support KPU in its goals to foster anti-racism; strengthen awareness and understanding of race, racism and anti-racism among employees and students; and address systemic barriers to full participation in the KPU community. These recommendations are ambitious in scope and pragmatic in approach. Achieving these goals will require a joint effort from across the institution, including leadership, students, faculty, and staff, the Board, the Senate, associations, unions, and administrative units.

The TFA's recommendations are based on our deliberations over the last two years; the results of the survey conducted by the TFA; results of the *Current State Inclusivity Assessment* (CSIA) conducted by KPU in 2021; student engagement surveys conducted by KPU's Office of Planning and Accountability; knowledge gathered through TFA members attending various workshops and panel discussions throughout the tenure of the TFA; our study of reports from various organizations and institutes; other postsecondary institutions' task forces, offices, policies and procedures; and best practices in the fields of EDID and anti-racism. This *Final Report* also captures all the conversations and consultations across the institution with representatives from all seven Faculties at KPU; members of the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC); updates at the IAC and at the President's Diversity and Equity Committee (PDEC);

representatives of the KSA, BCGEU, and KFA; representatives from the Board; and consultations with individuals across KPU.

It is important to note that these recommendations will have the desired impact only if we mobilize them to fundamentally transform our structures, systems, and institutions. We will need to implement meaningful changes to our pedagogical approaches, curriculum development, administrative strategies, and hiring and retention, and provide resources and expert personnel to move this work forward. We will need to move away from colonial, dominant, and Eurocentric approaches, incorporate more Indigenous and diverse approaches, and be guided by scholars of colour and Indigenous knowledge keepers. That is, KPU will need to move beyond simply embracing an EDI framework and take a more robust, anti-racist approach.

Recommendations (64):

Implement with Immediate Effect (6 major recommendations with further steps for implementation):

1. Establish an Implementation Committee (IC): a team with expertise in race, racism and anti-racism, policy, and institutional transformation to lead the cross-functional efforts for a period of 2 to 3 years, to evaluate progress, and to ensure that the recommendations of the TFA are being implemented.
   - The IC should start by building an Anti-Racism Action Plan to strategize, prioritize, and implement the recommendations made in this *Report*.
2. Establish an Office of Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence to streamline all KPU's anti-racism related work.
3. Establish a high-level position at the Associate Vice-President or similar level dedicated to anti-racism to lead the Office of Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence and to coordinate all anti-racism work at KPU.
4. Develop an institutional vision statement and policy (appendix 2) with a focus on anti-racism.
5. Form a sub-committee, to work in conjunction with the IC and the IAC, for a period of 3 to 6 months, to develop an anti-Indigenous racism Action Plan. This sub-committee must be led by an Indigenous person.
6. As a signatory of *the Scarborough Charter*, KPU work on meeting the commitments to the Charter. As a first step, KPU should establish a sub-committee on anti-Black racism for a period of 3 to 6 months to develop an anti-Black racism Action Plan to work in conjunction with the IC. This sub-committee must be led by a Black person.

Ongoing and long-term recommendations are organized thematically as follows:

- Need for Education and Training (5 recommendations)
- Curriculum and Pedagogy (7 recommendations)
- Research, Scholarship, and Creativity (7 recommendations)
- Composition of Leadership (4 recommendations)

- Inclusive and Equitable Hiring Processes/Retention (7 recommendations)
- Human Resources and the Complaints Process (6 recommendations)
- Transparent Systems of Data Collection (5 recommendations)
- Student Engagement (5 recommendations)
- Internationalization (3 recommendations)
- Initiatives to Accelerate Anti-Racism Activities at KPU (9 recommendations)

"the university is a racialized site that still excludes and marginalizes non-White people, in subtle, complex, sophisticated, and ironic ways, from everyday interactions with colleagues to institutional practices that at best are ineffective and at worst perpetuate structural racism" (Henry et al. 3).

KPU