



## **President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC)**

**Wednesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Gilmour Hall, Room 111 (Council Chambers)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Mané-Inés Arratia, Nancy Bouchier, Carolyn Brendon, Andrea Cole (Staff, Vice-Chair), Holly Corbett, Andy Crowell, Juliet Daniel, Jonathan Davis, Amber Dean, Alise deBie, Ryan Deshpande (Student, Vice-Chair), Judith Dworkin, Katherine Eaton, Julie Gouweloos, Noah Greenspoon, Sarah Jama, Ameil Joseph (Chair), Roseanne Kent, Shaila Kumbhare, Tara La Rose, Wanda McKenna, Rhonda Moore, Stash Nastos, Natacha Ngo, Lilian Obeng, Michelle Poirier, Shelley Porteous, Anne Pottier, Khadijeh Rakie (minutes), Stacey Ritz, Chris Roberts, Meaghan Ross, Vilma Rossi, Lynne Serviss, Lynn Stewart, Padmaja Sreeram, Elliot Storm, Karen Sutton, Thau Tieu (Paul), Albina Veltman, Sarah Wahab, Vanessa Watts, Alex Wilson, Helen Zeng

**Regrets:** Kayonne Christy, Jim McAndrew, Grace Pollock, Nicole Virgin

#### **1) Welcome and Introductions**

- Wanda announced that Shylo Elmayan, Employment Equity Specialist, is leaving McMaster to take a position with the City of Hamilton. In her new role, Shylo will be the City's Senior Project Manager, Urban Aboriginal Strategy where she will support the development of an Urban Aboriginal Strategy for Hamilton that reflects the recommendations of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.

#### **2) Approval of Minutes, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

- October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 minutes approved.

#### **3) National Day of Mourning and Action on Violence Against Women, December 6<sup>th</sup> Commemorative Event**

- Vanessa Watts
  - The Anti-Violence Network (AVN) annual December 6th commemorative event will focus on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW).
  - The event details are:
    - Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016
    - Social Sciences Community Room, 1003, Wilson Hall, McMaster University (Sterling Avenue Entrance, wheelchair accessible venue)
    - 11:30 am: Keynote Speaker: Robyn Bourgeois, Respondent: Bev Jacobs
    - 1:00 pm: Commemoration of new plaque and white pine trees in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Reception to follow.
    - All Day: Poster Display in Indigenous Studies Program ceremonial space
  - Donations of red dresses are being collected for this event. The Red Dress Project is an artistic and political response to the missing and murdered women (<http://www.redressproject.org/>). Red shirts, pants, and jackets are also being collected. Donations of red clothing can be dropped off at the Indigenous Studies Program (ISP) office located in Wilson Hall or at the Equity and Inclusion Office located in the McMaster University Student Centre (MUSC) Room 212

**4) US Election results ramifications and reflections - in small groups. The impact of the USA election on campus across Canada, including McMaster University, was acknowledged. After reflecting on the election of Donald Trump, Ameil invited participants to move in to small groups to discuss the following:**

- What are you witnessing from your own perspectives and places of work?
- What are you struggling with from your own perspectives and places of work?
- What needs do these things highlight for you in life, in policy, in law, at work?
- What are you involved with in terms of action?
- What resources and actions can we offer and take forward?
- What can PACBIC do?
  
- Group 1 Report Back:
  - Frustrations with what to do next.
  - Curriculum at McMaster should start to change.
  - PACBIC should fund and support activists on the ground who are fighting fascism on campus and in community.
  - Students are planning a walk-out.
  
- Group 2 Report Back:
  - Equity t-shirts were suggested to be created and worn to show an alternative to the Trump clothing being worn on campus.
  - It is problematic that individuals on campus feel emboldened to wear Trump garb and to put up posters for Alt-Right/White Supremacist groups.
  - Need to find ways for PACBIC to equally take up space.

- Calls out for a simple campaign to make it clear that PACBIC does not support racism, White Supremacy, bigotry, etc.
  - When does society label something as a symbol of hate? The symbol must be named as such before it is viewed as such.
  - PACBIC can put out a statement/position on the use of symbols and their effects on people.
- Group 3: Report Back
    - McMaster should teach fundamentals required to an understanding of privilege and oppression
    - There is a superficial understanding of what is right and wrong. People understand that you should not say certain things but do not realize why they should not say those things
  - Concern was expressed regarding the Alt-Right posters found in MUSC and elsewhere on campus on Monday, November 21, 2016. The posters were taken down and security services were informed of their presence.
  - Speak up when inclusivity doesn't happen

#### 5) **Working Group Updates & Reports:**

1. Accessibility & Accommodation (A&A) - no update provided
2. Race, Racism and Racialization (R3) – no update provided.
3. Employment Equity (EE) – no update provided
4. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Priorities (FNMI) – no update provided
5. Inter-Faith Issues (IFI). Andy reported the following:
  - **Groups Requesting Recognition within Chaplaincy:**
  - The Judaic and Muslim communities have requested the identification of a Chaplain with the University for their Faith communities.
  - Quick background: The origin of chaplaincy, historically, is Christian - but the function was/is not limited to Christian, nor was/is it limited to those who are religious; e.g. there are Muslim Chaplains, Jewish Chaplains, Humanist Chaplains
  - The conditions for applying to a Chaplaincy role have not been formalized at Mac (so far as we know), and the fact that the University has a Christian history (with a Christian Chaplaincy) has likely caused the University not to have to think about it beyond those perimeters.
  - We are saying that in the name of inclusivity the time is right to help enable a credible process for other groups to be included within the umbrella of chaplaincy. As a “working group”, we identified that such a process would be for those groups who are willing to honour a mandate of inclusivity (of the University

and the Chaplaincy Centre) and who seek to enact “spiritual care” that is non-judgemental and holistic, through naming a credible candidate, held in high-esteem by their community. Currently we have a conversation scheduled with University leadership to speak to these points

- **Prayer Space** – It is the hope of the group that a long-term plan for a multi-faith, multi-cultural space for prayer/meditation will one day be possible. Currently in conversation with MSU proposal.
  - **Halal and Kosher Food Accommodation**
  - The IFWG greatly appreciates the steps taken by Hospitality Services to provide more halal and kosher foods. The reality remains, however, that many students adhering to religious dietary practices are not always able to access the necessary food they need when they need it, while still paying for a full priced meal card. It is our intention to reach out to Hospitality Services to engage deeper on this issue.
  - **RISO (Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances) Academic Accommodation Policy**
  - The principle of “re-weighting” exams was discovered to be problematic in cases where, for example, holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot come so close to one another causing the re-weighting of exams to accumulate, and the stress becomes greater because of placing a substantial amount of the mark on one or two re-scheduled time periods.
  - **Cultural celebrations/decorations**
  - IFIWG began the discussion on how to ensure that different cultural, spiritual and faith traditions are recognized and celebrated all year long. This discussion was also taken up at P & P. Concerns have been raised that the activities that occur during the month of December (open houses, parties, decorations, etc) are de facto Christmas celebrations. It is believed that in diverse communities, all backgrounds and traditions should be celebrated. Our ultimate goal is one of inclusion and to this end, the Office of Equity and Inclusion has begun drafting a “tips” sheet which is available today for anyone who would like one. PACBIC members are encouraged to add to the list of suggestions by contacting [equity@mcmaster.ca](mailto:equity@mcmaster.ca)
6. Madness, Eugenics, Discrimination, and Sanism (MEDS) – no update provided
  7. Violence Against Women/ Gender-based Violence (VAW/GBV) – no update provided
  8. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer + (LGBTQ+)
    - The inaugural meeting took place prior to the PACBIC meeting on November 23, 2016.
    - It was a substantial and beneficial brainstorming session.
    - Over 40 people from across campus have expressed interest in the group and 20 attended the first meeting.

## 6) Other Business

- (a) Announcements:

- MSU Maccess: Call to Action: Anyone interest in having more disability courses on campus and interested in McMaster offering Disability Studies as a Major or Minor are recommended to contact Maccess: [maccess@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:maccess@msu.mcmaster.ca)
- *Finding Dawn*, a documentary about Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women will be held on Monday, November 28, 2016 in L.R. Wilson Hall, Suite 1811 from 3:30-5:30 pm.
- Anti-Racism Action Initiative on Friday, November 25, 2016 at the Hamilton Central Public Library from 6:00-8:00 pm.

**7. Adjournment and Next Meeting: The meeting was adjourned and the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 9:30am – 11:30am in the Council Chambers.**