

MINUTES

Vice-Principal (Culture, Equity and Inclusion)

Meeting:	University Council on Anti-Racism and Equity (UCARE) – (Public Meeting)	Date & Time:	January 13, 2025 4:00-5:30pm
Platform/Location:	TEAMS		
Chair:	Stephanie Simpson and Safiah Chowdury		
Members:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jana Amer (ex Officio – AMS Commissioner of Social Issues) Norma Barrett (ex Officio – University Ombudsperson) Coljae Berry (Elected – Graduate Student) Yunyi Chen (Elected – Staff) Matthew Evans (ex Officio – Provost) Kesha Fevier (Elected – Faculty) Corinna Fitzgerald, (ex Officio – Vice-Provost & Dean Student Affairs Delegate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bittu George (Elected – Alumna and Community Member) Lavonne Hood (ex Officio – AVP Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion) Rukkie Inikori (Elected – AMS Student) Nick Mosey (ex Officio – Principal’s Delegate) Nasser Saleh (Elected – Faculty) Stephanie Simpson (ex Officio – VPCEI) Kate Zucconi (Elected – SGPS Student) 	
Invited Guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deanna Fialho, Director, Yellow House 		
Additional Guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebecca Rappeport Mona Rahman Susan Belyea Giselle Valarezo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barb Lotan Jenny Corlett Aleksandra Bergier Julia Wang 	
Regrets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yvette Baninla (Elected – Staff) Jane Chin (ex Officio – Chair of SEEC) Safiah Chowdury (Elected – Alumna and Community Member) Supriya Venigalla (Elected – Staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mala Joneja (Elected – Faculty) Vanessa Mensah (Observer - EDI Manager, City of Kingston) Sangeetha Saravanan (ex Officio – SGPS Equity & Diversity Commissioner) 	
Discussion Item			
<p>Before the Meeting was called to order, Stephanie acknowledged Queen’s University’s presence on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples.</p>			
<p>1. Welcome and Adoption of the Agenda It was agreed by all to adopt the Agenda as circulated.</p>			
<p>2. Approval of the Minutes of October 28, 2024 It was moved by Jana seconded by Yunyi and agreed by all to approve the Minutes of October 28, 2024.</p>			
<p>3. Co-Chairs Remarks Stephanie welcomed UCARE members and guests, highlighting key events and developments. She emphasized January’s important commemorations, including Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27th and the National Day of Remembrance for the Quebec Mosque Attack on January 29th.</p> <p>Stephanie noted the recent controversy over federal funding for research excellence in Canada and its impact on the academic community, alongside shifts in institutional approaches to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Examples include the University of Alberta’s pivot toward access, community, and belonging, and the University of Manitoba’s introduction of mandatory anti-racism training. She also introduced Tracy-Ann Myers Johnson, the new</p>			

project manager for a speaker series addressing themes from the PICRDI report, aimed at fostering dialogue and institutional progress.

4. [H&D Report](#)

Stephanie provided key highlights from the H&D Report, including noting an increase in submissions, with students being the largest group of complainants and reporters. She did point out that single incidents submitted multiple times do significantly impact the numbers. She then explained that the Intake Assessment Team assesses whether complaints meet the prima facie threshold. 23% of the cases were referred for investigations.

Norma asked if there was a way to track where situations were referred and their outcomes. Stephanie responded that these cases are not case-managed by her team, as different administrative offices handle them, and added that tracking resolution satisfaction and reporting on it could be explored.

Nasser inquired about analyzing year-over-year trends, to which Stephanie agreed this could be included in next year's report.

Coljae suggested increasing student awareness of what constitutes harassment and discrimination and encouraging them to seek other services before filing formal complaints. Stephanie emphasized the importance of directing students to the Human Rights and Equity Office and continuing education on available avenues.

5. **Update from Yellow House**

Stephanie welcomed Deanna Fialho, Director of the Yellow House, who shared updates on its initiatives. Yellow House, launched in 2020, continues to develop new ideas, including the **Black at Queen's** program, which launched in September. Tianna Edwards, EDI Coordinator, is leading this project, which focuses on fostering Black joy, resilience, and inclusion. The program provides resources, bursary information, and a central hub for Black students at Queen's to build connections and community. Deanna emphasized partnerships with the City of Kingston, including contributions to Emancipation Day celebrations and initiatives like **Black Welcome**, which introduces Black faculty, staff, and students at the start of the academic year, and **Rhythm Cycle**, offering free spin classes for Black students, staff, and faculty.

Yellow House has also introduced programs like **Black Swims**, providing swimming lessons for all comfort levels, and **Black Light**, which uplifts and celebrates the Black community. **Afro Prism** creates an empowering space for Black queer students. These initiatives have seen strong engagement, with 319 participants in one term, many through repeat attendance. Collaborations with the Scarborough Charter, Queen's Black Clubs Caucus, and local businesses like JERKeBago and Pedal Works Café further support these efforts. Looking ahead, Yellow House plans to evaluate programs, expand outreach through boothing, focus on Afro Prism's growth, and gather ongoing feedback to strengthen its offerings. Stephanie commended Deanna for Yellow House's remarkable impact in just one year.

6. [I-EDIAA Report](#)

Stephanie expressed gratitude to the university community for advancing the mission and mandate of the University and working towards creating a welcoming environment for equity-deserving groups. Efforts include improving accessibility compliance, updating policies with an equity lens, and implementing community-focused initiatives.

Stephanie then spoke to some of the metrics in the report, noting progress in faculty hiring for all four EDGs, with hires above workforce availability. For staff, hiring was slightly lower than workforce availability, except for persons with disabilities. Student retention data showed an upward trend for students with disabilities after a dip in 2021, likely linked to pandemic-related barriers.

Deanna asked if there was up-to-date data on black students at Queens. Stephanie mentioned that OUAC is now collecting race-based data therefore we should have more reliable data in the future.

7. Employee Experience Survey Results – Racialized employees

Stephanie provided an update on the Employee Experience Survey launched in 2022, with plans for a follow-up in 2025. The survey included questions on I-EDIAA with its primary focus on job engagement. Key findings revealed no significant variance in responses between racialized and non-racialized faculty overall, though racialized faculty reported lower recognition and motivation to excel. The largest disparity was in harassment and discrimination, with racialized staff more likely to report incidents. Racialized staff also expressed less interest in wellness initiatives and lower ratings for equity and inclusion comfort. Stephanie emphasized that this data serves as a 2022 snapshot, with a commitment to ongoing monitoring and trend analysis.

Nasser added that QUFA (Queen’s University Faculty Association) is conducting a survey through its BIPOC Caucus, focused on racialized faculty experiences. With this survey, the QUFA BIPOC Caucus is hoping to support the QUFA bargaining team with information and suggestions for strengthening rights and protections for Black, Indigenous, and racialized QUFA members. The survey is designed in two parts. The first part will ask you about experiences with racism at Queen’s in research, teaching, and service. The second part will ask you about your bargaining priorities so we can communicate them to the bargaining team. With 55 responses so far, the survey remains open until the end of January, aiming to gather insights and inform further efforts.

8. Announcements/Other Business

Stephanie mentioned the black student undergraduate research awards. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) have each introduced their respective [Black Student Undergraduate Student Research Awards \(USRAs\) program](#).

The goal of both CIHR and SSHRC’s program is to provide research experience that complements the degree program that undergraduate students are pursuing, which may lead them to consider graduate studies careers in the fields of health and life sciences (CIHR) or the social sciences and humanities (SSHRC).

Aleks also added the following to the chat: For those students who self-identify as Indigenous or Black and are interested in a research project in natural sciences and engineering we can recommend names beyond our NSERC funded USRA allocated quota. The student needs to contact the home department of their potential supervisor to request an application form and information about the deadline (in most cases the deadline is mid to late February).

We also have 3 CIHR positions and 3 SSHRC positions for those students who self-identify as black in interested in conducting a research project in the social sciences and humanities, and health research. We will adjudicate these positions centrally and those interested should contact me directly.

Mona informed the Council of the ‘Give 30’ campaign launching February 20th. Give 30 is a fundraising initiative asking everyone to support the fight against hunger during Ramadan by supporting local food banks across Canada. Please help spread the word.

Next Public Meeting: March 10, 2025

Queen’s University is situated on the territory of the Haudenosaunee & Anishinaabek