

President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity and Decolonization

Annual Report
2024-2025

Collaboratively Submitted by PACHRED Executive Members:
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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Thematic Focus for 2024/25.....	1
PACHRED Workflow.....	2
PACHRED Meetings.....	2
PACHRED's Work	2
2SLGBTQ+ Working Group.....	7
Anti-Ableism and Mental Health (AAMH)	13
Anti-Racism Committee (ARC).....	16
Decolonization Working Group.....	22
Employment Equity Working Group	25
Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVP)	28
Appendices	32

Introduction

We are proud to submit this final report about the work of PACHRED during another exceptional year and one in which, in the broader political arena, the values we were created to support are increasingly and profoundly under attack. We believe passionately that universities must be a space that preserves academic freedom and critical engagement on issues that span higher education, across Turtle Island and across nations – as Brock’s research culture and people are also locally and globally connected. The following report provides an overview and an archive of our work in response to this difficult historical moment.

Thematic Focus for 2024/25

PACHRED’s thematic focus for 2024/25 continues to be grounded in insights from Audre Lorde, epitomized by the quote:

“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”
From Lorde's address "Learning from the 60s" which was delivered on February 1982 as part of the Malcolm X Weekend celebration at Harvard University.

During 2024-2025 PACHRED has prioritized responding to the following:

1. The equity concerns of international students during a period of increasing xenophobia and racism ([view article](#));
 2. The genocide ([view article](#)) against Palestinians, especially in the occupied Gaza Strip that 100 aid organizations are now saying has resulted in mass forced starvation of civilians ([view article](#));
 3. Our continued work to support increased services for 2SLGBTQQIA+ and BIPOC students, in a context where attacks against Black, trans, non-binary, two-spirit, and queer people are being normalized everywhere from on the street to legislatures ([view article](#));
 4. In collaboration with the Decolonization Working Group of PACHRED and consistent with our foundational commitment to decolonization, we have supported initiatives which speak-back to residential school denialism ([view article](#)), which has unfortunately been afforded a platform at Brock.
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PACHRED Workflow

The PACHRED Executive meets on a weekly basis throughout the fall and winter terms and bi-weekly in the summer and the PACHRED Coordinating Committee meets monthly during the fall and winter terms. The work of the Executive includes preparing new members through an orientation, developing ideas to support working groups and coordinating committee chairs in the flow of their activities throughout the year and organizing larger PACHRED meetings and special events throughout the year.

The Executive also meets with Senior Administration including the AVP EDI, the Provost, and President to discuss pressing concerns to the university including Islamophobia and antisemitism on campus, challenges faced by International students, and the impact of budget cuts on staffing and EDI efforts. In 2024-2025 President Rigg attended the March general PACHRED meeting to hear concerns and ideas directly from the PACHRED membership. Below we provide more details on these activities.

PACHRED Meetings

During the academic year there were five meetings held of the broader PACHRED membership and these focused on providing education and awareness on the topics the coordinating committee had confirmed as priorities as well as allowing space for updates from working groups.

These meetings included the following information:

- **September** – Orientation for new members and discussion of 2024-2025 priorities
- **October** – Presentation of environmental scan on services for Black & 2SLGBTQ+ students and mental health resources in sister universities in Ontario. Discussion of next steps to support these students at Brock. Presentations were provided by Alli Role, PACHRED RA; and Alison Drew Hassling, Director, SWAC.
- **November** – Screening of the award-winning documentary film *Israelism* (2023).
- **January** – Panel event: Challenging Racism and Xenophobia Targeting International Students: Law, Media, and Activist Resistance.
- **March** – Meeting with President Lesley Rigg and reports from PACHRED Working Groups.

These meetings were held in a hybrid environment and are open to all.

PACHRED's Work

Educational events and raising awareness

Consistent with our thematic focus for 2024/25, PACHRED hosted several events on the priorities mapped out above.

November 2024:

An in-person screening of the award-winning documentary film *Israelism* (2023) and a Palestinian buffet, with a virtual Q&A with co-director Sam Eilertsen, on November 19th (5:30-8:30pm) at the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts. Admission was free ([view poster](#)).

The *Israelism* screening was co-sponsored/endorsed by Independent Jewish Voices Hamilton; Jewish Faculty Network; Niagara Movement for Justice in Palestine-Israel; Silver Spire United Church; and Brock University's Centre for Women's and Gender Studies; Faculty for Palestine; Indigenous Educational Studies; Social Justice and Equity Studies MA Program; and the Social Justice Research Institute.

The event sold-out in advance of the screening with over 200 attendees with more than half of the audience joining from the wider Niagara community. After the film audience members had a wide-ranging Q&A discussion with Sam Eilertsen. We were delighted to work with Alaa Hejji who catered the event and provided a delicious Palestinian buffet.

January 2025:

The panel ***Challenging Racism and Xenophobia Targeting International Students: Law, Media, and Activist Resistance***, on Thursday, January 30th (4-6pm) in Sankey Chambers. Admission was free and we provided a Palestinian buffet ([view poster](#)).

The panel featured keynote speaker Dr. Vasanthi Venkatesh, Chair of the Transnational Law and Racial Justice Network at Windsor University's Faculty of Law and Navjot Salaria, an international student alumnus from York University and organizer with the Naujawan Support Network. The panelists were joined by two student/alumni respondents, Tiffany Muhindi (undergraduate, Poli Sci) and Kaho Nishibu (alumni, Sociology) both from Brock. The event was co-sponsored by the Anti-Racism Committee, the Social Justice & Equity Studies MA Program, the Social Justice Research Institute, and the Center for Women's and Gender Studies.

Panelists highlighted how international students are positioned within Canada's neoliberal education and immigration systems in a context where provincial disinvestment has created a vacuum filled by international tuition dollars, without the corresponding support structures. Panelists spoke candidly about the exploitation and precarity experienced by these students, including unjust employment practices, lack of access to benefits, and increasingly restrictive immigration policies. Recent federal caps on post-graduate work permits and the temporary suspension of permanent residency pathways have left thousands of students across Ontario

vulnerable to undocumented status, sudden healthcare loss, and deportation. Taken together, these contributions painted a stark picture of the structural conditions affecting international students, conditions that extend beyond campus and into wider questions of labor, migration, policing, and colonialism. The event urged audience members to consider how university services could be more fully aligned with the lived realities students are navigating the importance of challenging the broader discourses of xenophobia and racism that are enabling these intensifying challenges.

March 2025:

The panel, ***Narratives of Healing, Resilience, and Hope: Residential School Stories and Impacts***, with Lyn Trudeau (WGST), Matthew Mackenzie (DART), Sheila Cote-Meek (EDU), and Josh Manitowabi (History), on March 6th, in Plaza 600F (4-6pm).

The Decolonization Working Group (DWG) organized this panel in response to Frances Widdowson's invited talk, 'Grave Error' at Kamloops Residential School: How Does it Relate to Academic Freedom? at the inaugural Tomáš Hudlický Memorial Lecture for Academic Freedom on Oct. 29th, 2024. The working group's objective was to bring together Indigenous faculty who have familial experience with residential schools to reflect on the ways this has shaped their contemporary teaching and research practice.

The PACHRED membership believe there is an urgent need to respond to Widdowson's work as she engages in what is known as [residential school denialism](#) which represents less academic analysis than a targeted attack on Indigenous peoples and knowledges, in ways that contribute towards a hostile and inflammatory work environment for Indigenous faculty and others committed to Indigenous knowledge production.

Audience support for this panel was evident in the turnout: every seat in Plaza 600F was taken and many people sat on the floor. Panelists provided insightful reflections on their own familial experiences with residential schools and made connections between their families as they spoke. A delicious Haudenosaunee dinner was appreciated by all participants.

One outcome of this event was that several new faculty members have volunteered to work as allies in support of the Decolonization Working Group and PACHRED to ensure a continued mobilization to challenge residential school denialism and anti-Indigenous racism at all levels of the university.

March 2025:

A screening of ***Letter to My Tribe, a video essay*** by award-winning filmmaker and installation artist b.h. Yael, on Monday, March 10th (1-4pm) in a very full Sankey Chambers.

The film explores the question: *Why don't more Jews and Israelis speak out about Palestine?* Drawing on decades of conversations with her mother who lives in Israel, interviews with journalists, activists, and a rabbi, and documentation of actions in the West Bank, Iraq, and Poland, Yael examines the intersections of identity, history, and political responsibility. Following

the screening, Yael participated in an extended discussion with audience members offering insights into the making of the film and the broader conversations it aims to foster.

b.h. Yael is a Professor of Integrated Media at OCAD University and an internationally recognized filmmaker whose work explores activism, geopolitical and environmental urgencies, and social justice. Her films have been exhibited in festivals, galleries, and academic institutions worldwide.

Successes

1. At the conclusion of the panel ***Challenging the Racism and Xenophobia Targeting International Students: Law, Media, and Activist Resistance***, on Thursday, January 30th in discussion with students, faculty and staff, members of the audience proposed that PACHRED create a new working group to foreground the equity related concerns of international students. In March 2025, the Coordinating Group approved the creation of this group.

In June, Anmol Rughani, PACHRED RA, completed a Briefing Note to circulate to those interested in joining the International Student Working Group, and a draft Terms of Reference. Members of the Brock community have been reaching out to the executive team to indicate their interest in joining. We anticipate meeting with the Provost, Arja Vainio-Mattila, and the new VP Indigenous Affairs, David Begg, in the fall.

The briefing note and draft terms of reference for the new international student working group are included as Appendix 1 at the end of this Annual Report, for review. A budget line for the international student working group has been included in the PACHED financial plan for 2025-2026.

2. On April 22nd, the Employment Equity Working Group hosted a panel discussion with the provost, Arja Vainio-Mattila, and all union presidents (BUFA, OSSTF Unit 35, CUPE 1295 and 4207), and representatives of the professional staff. This event emphasized the need for collective advocacy, better resource allocation, improved transparency, and structural reforms to align employees lived experiences with the University's stated values. At the conclusion, participants discussed the importance of working together to build more public awareness in the region regarding the systemic underfunding of universities and the potentially catastrophic consequences of this for the Niagara region. We anticipate that this group will meet again in the fall of 2025 to organize a public education event on this topic for a wide audience from Brock and the Niagara Region.
3. In our events on the genocide unfolding in Palestine with particular attention to the Gaza strip and the West Bank, we foregrounded work by Jewish anti-Zionist filmmakers and scholars, who are exploring the roots of the current crisis in ways that demonstrate that there is no homogeneous 'Jewish' perspective on actions by the state of Israel.

In this series we were proud to be able to work in partnership with Independent Jewish Voices Hamilton; Jewish Faculty Network; Niagara Movement for Justice in Palestine-Israel; Silver Spire United Church; and Faculty for Palestine as well as many research centers and academic departments to foster these conversations and plan to continue to

do so in 2025-2026. We are now planning a panel on antisemitism in 2025-2026 to continue these important discussions.

4. While we were not successful in our ongoing discussions with BUSU to sponsor a referendum to provide funding for the Black Student Success Center and the Qmmunity Commons (a center for 2SLGBTQ+ students) we have had many conversations with new and old BUSU staff and board members that we believe should facilitate our moving these projects forward this coming year.

In addition, we are thrilled that the 2SLGBTQ+ Working Group, in consultation with its members, is establishing a new QCommons website to provide resources and supports to students both on and off campus. Check out the new site: [QCommons](#)

5. Under the leadership of Lyn Trudeau, chair of the Decolonization Working Group, PACHRED supported the event ***Narratives of Healing, Resilience, and Hope: Residential School Stories and Impacts***, which provided an eloquent response to the platforming of residential school denialism at Brock.

Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy (RWLEP)

In coordination with the Provost's Office, Student Life and Success, the Office of Human Rights and Equity, Legal Services, and PACHRED, a working group was assembled to review the existing RWLEP and make recommendations for approval by the Board of Trustees.

During this review, it became clear that there needs to be additional work to better understand how individuals interact with the policy and determine which services or departments are responsible for different aspects of implementing the RWLEP. Work on these issues is ongoing, by the Legal, Compliance and Privacy Unit, the Office of Human Rights and Equity and the Office of People and Culture who have dedicated time and resources to the ongoing development of this policy.

Nominations Committee Report

The Nomination Committee is comprised of Staff, Faculty and Students drawn from the membership of PACHRED to oversee annual changes within the PACHRED membership including making recommendations to the AVP EDI and President's Office for the Executive Committee.

Changes to the Executive

For 2024-2025 the Nominations Committee received applications from students across a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, all of which demonstrated their commitment to seeking progressive change at the University. After reviewing these applications, we were delighted to welcome several new members to PACHRED including students, staff and faculty.

The executive wishes to express our profound thanks to Tiffany Muhindi (B.A. Poli Sci) and Noah Xiao (Ph.D. Biotechnology) who served as joint Student Co-Chairs for the 2024-2025

academic year. We want to highlight, in particular, Tiffany's thoughtful contribution as one of the student respondents in the panel ***Challenging Racism and Xenophobia Targeting International Students: Law, Media, and Activist Resistance*** in January 2025 and Noah's expression of interest and commitment to take on a leadership role in the newly forming International Student Working Group that will begin its work in the fall of 2025, as a Brock alumni.

The PACHRED Executive committee would also like to express their sincere gratitude to Dr. Richard Ndayizigamiye, who has served as the Chair of the Anti-Racism Committee for 6 years and served as a member of the PACHRED Co-ordinating Committee in this role. During their time with PACHRED, Dr. Ndayizigamiye has been instrumental in a variety of projects including promoting increased awareness of Black mental health challenges and anti-Asian racism, supporting events for Black History month, activism on the Black cluster hire, and advocacy to increase the representation of BIPOC members across all areas of the university.

Finally, the nominations committee is actively seeking new student members for the 2025-2026 academic year, and we are excited to learn from their insights in our work on equity, human rights, and decolonization as we gather again in the fall term.

PACHRED Membership

The work of PACHRED could never be completed without the amazing students, staff and faculty that make up the membership. Each year, we are humbled by the passion, perseverance and pride these members bring to our work. We hope the next section of this report provides an opportunity to showcase their activism and commitment through the working group activities. This work deserves the universities deep gratitude as these members are the heart and soul of PACHRED.

2SLGBTQ+ Working Group

Faculty Co-Chairs: Pauli Gardner (Associate Professor, Public Health & Gerontology) & Cathy van Ingen (Professor, Kinesiology)

Committee Members

We do not currently share a member list to protect participant privacy. This year meetings have ranged between 11 – 23 participants in attendance including undergraduate and graduate students, staff and faculty.

Introduction

The 2S&LGBTQIA+ Working Group aims to improve the lives of Two-Spirit and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual members of the Brock community through programming, resources, and support. The 2S&LGBTQIA+ Working Group acts as a centralized hub for conversations and initiatives that serve to identify and respond to emerging concerns and/or opportunities to amplify presence and increase inclusiveness at Brock.

The 2S&LGBTQIA+ Working Group co-chairs were appointed September 16, 2024, and tasked with the core priority of working towards a referendum to establish a 2S&LGBTQ+ Student Centre.

Meetings

Both co-chairs attended numerous consultations/meetings between Sept – December to prepare for a presentation to the BUSU Board of Directors regarding the referendum to establish a 2S&LGBTQ+ Student Centre and to provide additional funding for the Black Student Success Centre (BSSC).

Working Group meetings were held online and/or in person on:

- November 4, 2024
- January 28, 2025: This meeting included members of the Brock Pride Club and focused on strengthening collaboration between students and the Working Group.
- April 15, 2025

Action Items

Our commitments for the 2024-25 year included:

1. Collaborated with the BSSC to pursue a referendum for Q-Commons (a proposed 2S&LGBTQ+ Student Centre) and increased support for the BSSC.
2. Met with the Brock Pride Club executive team.

3. Provided financial support to Brock Pride through donation.
4. Participated in Pride Week 2025 planning.
5. Engaged with other PACHRED working groups on joint events and consultations.
6. Contributed to relevant items in the 2024 Equity Census.
7. Q-Commons: A major achievement for the year is the development of a digital community/resource hub for the 2S&LGBTQIA+ students (Q-Commons). The idea for Q-Commons comes directly from the 2S&LGBTQIA+ community at Brock and in particular students who attended our January 28th Working Group Meeting.

Progress to date

After spending the fall term working on a failed referendum initiative, the winter term has been spent initiating the development of Q-Commons. A research assistant has generated a list of resources, both on and off campus, which are available to 2S&LGBTQ+ students. A web developer has begun work on developing the site and a logo has been designed. The priority is getting the website launched and providing a list of resources/supports available to students both on and off campus. Additional work on the site will follow this launch.

Community Outreach/Events

Pride Week was held from March 20th to April 4th, 2025, and included numerous online and in person events, attended by Brock students, staff, faculty and the wider St. Catharines community.

- March 7: Participated in International Women's Day film screening and panel: *What Ales Us?* co-sponsored by: PACHRED, the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies. This film was produced and directed by co-chair Cathy van Ingen.
- March 20: Drag Show and Pasta Bar
- March 24: Redefining Masculinity: Deconstructing Harmful Norms Workshop
- March 24: Paint Your Pride: Craft-Making in the Makerspace
- March 25: Queer Care: A Guide to Personal Wellness
- March 25: Puppies for Pride featuring the Therapaws Therapy Dogs
- March 25: A member of the Working Group facilitated the *Beyond the Reading List: Pedagogies of Inclusion* workshop, offering an online space for faculty, staff, and students to reflect on inclusive teaching practices and share strategies for embedding 2SLGBTQIA+ perspectives into curriculum and pedagogy.
- March 26: Queering Consent Workshop
- March 27: 2S&LGBTQ Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence

- March 27: Debunked: Gender-Affirming Care Myths Workshop
- March 28: Queering Collages
- March 31: Healthy Relationships Workshop
- April 4: Pride Prom

Lessons Learned

Our work in 2024-2025 was initially (first 4 months after the appointment of the co-chairs) focused on establishing a 2S&LGBTQ+ Student Centre. An extensive amount of time and effort went into this initiative, and we learned a great deal through this process.

Referendum Activities and Insights:

- An environmental scan was completed by a research assistant that outlined the need for robust student supports at Brock for 2SLGBTQIA+ students. A 2SLGBTQIA+ Student Centre would provide a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive space that would enhance the health and well-being of 2SLGBTQIA+ students through educational and social initiatives, programming, and peer services to provide holistic support for 2SLGBTQIA+ students in all aspects of life.
- Present to BUSU Board (November 26, 2024, Presentation by Monique Beauregard and Sarah Pierson).
- The BUSU Board of Directors denied the request for a referendum with the rationale that these services should be funded by Brock's central administration, as part of their core mission, not by students. There remains no such funding for 2S&LGBTQ+ students, despite evidence that they face significant intersectional challenges in higher education.
- After meeting with the Brock Pride Club executive and other 2S&LGBTQ+ students, we learned that students are struggling to find and connect with meaningful resources services and programming (including queer and trans therapists), both on and off campus.
- In response, the Working Group committed to developing an online space, called Q-Commons. Q-Commons is a website that will initially focus on listing available resources and supports for 2S&LGBTQ+ students. It will also be a space through to raise awareness of initiatives of the Working Group, Pride Club, and other 2SLGBTQIA+ led initiatives, and be a site to share information as well as mobilize around future advocacy efforts.
- In addition, students informed us about a critical knowledge gap - students are often unaware of what programming/supports are available on campus. Staff from various programs at Brock (CPI, SAS, Student Life & Success, etc.) are eager to connect with and support 2SLGBTQIA+ students. More conversation is needed between 2SLGBTQIA+ undergraduate/graduate students and staff/faculty, to continue to explore possibilities for intersectional programming and collaborative advocacy and support.

Other important insights for the 2024-2025 year:

- *Intersectionality*: It is important to note that our work is intersectional in nature and has been enriched through collaboration and consultation with the membership of PACHRED, members of the various committees and working groups, and through Pride Club and other undergraduate and graduate students.
- *Pride Week*: In reflecting on Pride Week 2025, Working Group members and students noted that hosting programming in late March and early April may limit participation due to student burnout and competing academic deadlines. As a result, there was significant interest in planning Pride-related events earlier in the academic year, potentially in the fall semester, to allow for greater engagement, energy, and capacity. This shift would also allow for a broader distribution of 2SLGBTQIA+ programming throughout the year and may help foster more sustained connection and visibility on campus.

Challenges

It is difficult times for justice seeking people and for the 2S&LGBTQ+ community. The current political climate, marked by rising anti-trans legislation, anti-2SLGBTQIA+ hate, and the broader rollback of equity-related protections across North America, has had a profound impact on students. Many are navigating increasing fear, burnout, and isolation, compounded by the invisibility of these issues within institutional settings.

At Brock and beyond, queer and trans students have reported feeling unsupported, tokenized, or unsure where to turn for meaningful care and support. The broader “hellscape” of regressive policies and public discourse is not abstract, it is lived daily by students who are attempting to learn, work, and build community while contending with systemic violence and erasure. Pride Niagara’s cancellation of their annual Pride in the Park event due to rising security costs was just one local example of how queer and trans communities are being forced to shrink their presence for the sake of safety. Our Working Group sees this context as inseparable from our work and continues to centre care, resistance, and community-building in all programming and advocacy efforts.

The student RA’s who work for PACHRED, many of whom are queer and racialized, are required to navigate multiple intersection systems of oppression in their work. This is complex, difficult and embodied labour in spaces where they are at risk for discomfort and harm. As such the RA’s that contributed to the referendum initiative are no longer working with PACHRED and we hold ourselves responsible to learn from this experience and to take better care of RAs in the future.

Goals for 2025-2026

- Continue to develop Q-Commons (digital space)
- Lobby for additional supports, including a physical space, for 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

- Design and host 2 events (one fall, one winter) to increase awareness and celebrate Brock's 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- Increase capacity including membership and improve student engagement.
- Build Partnerships with organizations, groups and allies – on campus and Niagara.
- Establish a Brock Pride Award to recognize individuals (students and staff) who have made significant contributions to Brock's 2S&LGBTQ+ community.

Recommendations

- Hire a full-time 2S&LGBTQ+ gender and sexual diversity advocate in a staff capacity.
 - Increase the availability of queer healthcare services including mental health therapists on campus for students.
 - Coalition building – facilitate conversation between 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff/faculty to explore possibilities for intersectional programming and collaborative advocacy and support.
 - Increase outreach to expand PACHRED 2S&LGBTQ+ inclusion, especially increasing awareness that membership in the working group is open to staff.
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Anti-Ableism and Mental Health (AAMH)

Chair: Maureen Connolly

Vice-Chairs: Demi Perrotta; Ben Johnson

Committee Members

Members: Demi Perrotta, Ben Johnson, Megan Kuzak, Athena Colman, Stacey Duncan, Allison Drew-Hasling, Adele Orr, Syna Thakur (Research), Jennifer Thiessen (Library), Andrew Bassingthwaite, Ann Gagne, Anne Readhead, Tricia Vause, Ashley Giroux, Marion Barbas (Registrar's office), Nadia Ganesh, Shadae Brown, Kennedy Hance, Behnaz Mirzai, Lisa Peso, Alison Rothwell, Martina Ciglenecki, Aishah Sonekan.

Introduction

The working group's purpose is to provide expertise and analysis to the President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity and Decolonization in order that it may advise the President on issues related to anti-ableism and mental health; using an anti-ableist approach, to increase awareness of ableism and advocate for the dismantling of barriers to equal participation in all aspects of the University for all members of the university that identify as disabled; to act as a cohesive and focused campus resource on anti-ableism and mental health issues, to identify emerging issues, encourage research and innovative efforts and share promising practices.

AAMH offers a variety of ways to be involved:

- Be on the committee, attend as many meetings as possible and be actively engaged in the committee's focus and Policy review and commentary. This will entail relating to or commenting on the Policy review from one's staff, student, or faculty location/context at Brock University.
- Be on the committee, attend, when possible, be less involved in the ongoing work, offer commentary on work that is being done in an ongoing way (this may entail commenting from one's location or context at Brock University).
- Be on the committee as a learning experience to gain more knowledge and context about inclusion at Brock University.

Meetings

- October 8, 2024
- November 12, 2024
- December 4, 2024
- February 11, 2025

- March 11, 2025
- May 12, 2025.

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

We focused on our ongoing responsibilities, these being, overseeing the nomination and adjudication processes for the Accessibility and Inclusion Recognition Awards; organizing and hosting the International Day for Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) event; organizing and hosting the Ability and Empowerment Day (AAED); and carrying out our regular awareness raising activities.

In keeping with a focus on intersectionality, marginalization, and interconnectedness, we recommended early in our planning that:

1. There would be more publicly visible discussions and activities that normalized the presence of disabled people engaging in their everyday lives.
2. There would be more active engagement of and with students, faculty and staff from across disciplines, identities, and cultures.
3. There would be more tenured faculty members working on projects that involved tackling unpleasant or uncomfortable issues.
4. There would be more seamless communication between and across groups committed to inclusion and anti-ableism.
5. A 'tool kit' that collected all the accessibility information in one resource would be a worthwhile project.
6. We would engage in collaboration with other groups committed to meaningful inclusion.

Action Items

We fulfilled all our responsibilities, and the IDPD and AAED events were well attended. We also hosted three 'pop ups' per term to highlight the visibility of disabled people on campus.

1. Inclusivity week was overseen by two students on AAMH who spent the week of November 13-22 scouring the campus for spaces and practices that encouraged inclusion and belonging.
2. Further, students were involved in both nomination and adjudication of the IARA.
3. Our events and workshops attract intersected and diverse attendees who report feeling welcomed and valued.
4. Although we tend to be lacking in faculty involvement, with students and staff being our most frequent attendees, our collaborations with other groups and units on campus remains strong.

5. Our challenges remain in the areas of faculty involvement, communication, and the completion of our tool kit resource.

Community Outreach/Events

- November 13-22: Inclusivity Week
- December 4: Nomination, adjudication (November) and presentation of IARAs
- December 4: IDPD
- February 19: Ability and Empowerment Day
- March 19: Accessibility Gaming Event
- May 15: Global Accessibility Awareness Day Workshop
- May 26 – 30: National Accessibility Awareness Week, 'Try a ParaSport'

Lessons Learned

- Communication remains a significant challenge at Brock — knowing who is doing what, when, and where, even among groups who are resonant in their purposes, is dysfunctional. Clear communication processes, a single 'go to platform', an agreed upon means of checking in on projects to avoid duplication or contradiction, and using the policies and procedures we have in place to support anti-ableism would be improvements that would remove barriers. Barriers to communication are barriers to inclusion.
- Compliance is NOT accessibility and is not inclusion. It is a minimum standard.
- Academic accommodation is a responsibility under the AODA and the Post Secondary Standards; the work on the revised academic accommodation policy review is necessary and deserves our support.
- We do not have a workload standard that is adequately described or captured in our employment standards.
- People working together and communicating with intention can achieve some of the goals they set; however, we continue to wonder why it is so hard to do a good thing.
- Disabled students, faculty, and staff like to be consulted about policies and practices that directly affect their lives.

What progress has been made?

We made progress on all our recommendations except faculty involvement, effective institutional communication practices, and the completion of our tool kit resource.

What were the challenges?

- Faculty involvement in supporting anti-ableism and inclusion; there are competing rights and responsibilities that create tensions.
- Cross committee and institutional communication practices in general. All the groups on campus who address inclusion and accessibility need to report to an umbrella 'accessibility committee' so that we know what each other is doing and how we can contribute to the overall commitment to accessibility and inclusion.
- Tool kit resource completion: the biggest challenges are time and people who have availability.
- Ignorance of or unwillingness to follow the policies and procedures we already have in place to support anti-ableism and authentic inclusion.

Goals for 2025-2026

- Continue with our regular events; they are worthwhile, they follow the principles of disability justice, they allow for engagement across disciplines, identities, and cultures, and they are (mostly) fun.
- Continue our advising and collaboration.
- Get more tenured faculty involved in inclusion work on campus.
- Engage one or two students as interns to assist us in completing our tool kit.
- Encourage the formation of an umbrella 'accessibility committee' which meets regularly and includes the chairs and vice chairs of the groups on campus engaging in accessibility and inclusion work.

Recommendations

- Follow the accessibility and inclusion policy and procedures already in place.
 - Take seriously the staggering demand on SAS and its cascade effect on teaching, learning, research, and overall university functioning.
 - Read and adhere to the Post Secondary Standards, especially the formation of the university umbrella 'accessibility committee'.
 - Engage seriously in discussions about institutional communication practices; perhaps a working group charged with describing and evaluating how important information is formulated, by whom; how it is dispersed, by whom; who receives it, and how do we know?
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Anti-Racism Committee (ARC)

Co-Chairs: Marla Terreberry-Portfilio, Syna Thakur & Richard Ndayizigamiye

Committee Members

Ayena Ahad, Beza Anteneh, Aliya Aragon, Anteneh Ayanso, Shadaé Brown, Marilyne Carrey, Rabia Choudhary, Taylor Court, Zack DeBruyne, Derek Foster, Tassia Gabiddon, Liz Hay, Yasmine Hejazi, Clelia Dawn Kakiroko, Kimana, Shaka Licorish, Justin Mafie, Ayesha Masood, Koreen McCullough, Tiffany Muhindi, Richard Ndayizigamiye, Jean Ntakirutimana, Bailey O'Hagan, Katie Pickles, Abdul Rahimi, Aishah Sonekan, Leanne Taylor, Marla Terreberry-Portfilio, Syna Thakur, Kay Nwakerundu Wabaso, Xiaoyang Xia, David Yesaya, Eldira Zahaj.

Introduction

ARC advocates for the development of programs, services, policies, procedures, and protocols at the unit level and campus-wide, which educate, encourage, and promote a culture of anti-racism on campus. The committee identifies and facilitates opportunities for increased collaboration, cooperation and synergy amongst campus units, groups, and committees with an interest in anti-racist systemic change. We promote activities intended to inform the on and off-campus Brock communities about anti-racism initiatives intended to effect systemic anti-racist cultural transformation. It assesses the impact of Anti-Racism Committee initiatives and its collaborative engagements.

Meetings

- October 3, 2024
- October 27, 2024
- January 15, 2025
- February 19, 2025
- April 16, 2025
- May 21, 2025

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

1. Creation of a Terms of Reference for the Committee: this was an urgent matter as the TOR needed to be updated and made current.
2. Continued support of the Black Student Success Centre (BSSC). As an affinity space, it focuses on meeting the needs of Black students, uplifting them through supports of various kinds. The BSSC is centered around Blackness; IBPOC students and allies are welcomed to participate.

3. Intersectionality was the guiding principle for ARC activities for this academic year, in continuation of the PACHRED overall theme for 2023-2024. ARC continued its efforts to find ways to apply it within the mandate of the group, and making efforts to incorporate this theme in more anti-racism-based programming. There needs to be mobilization against all kinds of hate-motivated acts directed at marginalized communities, whether these are based on religion, culture, race, sexual orientation, etc. There is an urgent necessity for creating/highlighting spaces for multiple equity-denied identities and providing resources to support them.
4. Continue exploring ways in which ARC can be more supportive of the work that students do:
 - a. Keeping up with funding campus initiatives is always beneficial: encourage students to connect with ARC and submit funding proposal requests.
 - b. Engage students to determine the types of events they want to see happen.
 - c. Ensure BHM/AHM programming is connected to the theme: address the lack of programming for certain focused themes such as disability justice.
 - d. Help students overcome barriers within the university that prevent them from expressing their distress and grief at certain local and world issues that impact their health and well-being: ARC can do so by advocating on their behalf to the appropriate administrative channels.
5. Address the disconnect between the Faculties at Brock and the work that the Anti-Racism Committee does, as well as with the HRE Office:
 - a. Explore measures to hold Brock University Senior Administration accountable in their response to anti-racism and anti-oppressive initiatives led by ARC, HREO, and other institutions within Brock.
 - b. Track our progress and follow-through on initiatives via metrics.
 - c. Provide an update on dis-aggregated data on the demographic of Brock for students, faculty and staff per country of origin.

Workday has the potential to capture faculty/staff demographic information. An Equity Census has been initiated, which will hopefully capture this data. There is also a need to collect data on student visa refusals for applications from Africa and find a way to check-in with the progress of our initiatives. The Headcount Enrolment Report Academic Year 2022-23 from Institutional Planning, Analysis and Performance, provides country of citizenship for international students.

Community Events and Outreach

Black History/African Heritage Month

- We Were Here: The Untold History of Black Africans in Renaissance Europe (film screening and discussion with Director Fred Kudjo Kuwormu (Walker Cultural Leader, MIWSFPA) at The Film House (First Ontario PAC, Feb. 4, 2025).
- Black & African Scholars: The Importance of Decolonizing Research (Feb. 12, 2025), an event aimed at amplifying the profiles, accomplishments, and contributions of Black

scholars (graduate students and faculty) with academic and non-academic invitees. Invited speakers from the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Education, Mathematics and Science, and Social Sciences, engaged in a sustained conversation about the role and impact of decolonization in research and knowledge production. The following captivated the audience: Dr. Janelle Joseph (Keynote Speaker), Alli Rolle (Panelist), Dr. Blessing Ogbuokiri (Panelist), Nwakerendu (Kay) Wabaso (Panelist), Dr. Dolana Mogadime (Event Host), and Dr. Deborah O’Leary (Remarks).

- “Building Better Research Panel” – Students Edition (online, Feb. 15, 2025),
- “Mindsets of Entrepreneurialism and Black Commerce. (Feb. 5, 2025).

What progress has been made?

1. We held an in person welcome event early in the Fall semester (October 15, 2024) and thereby secured additional student committee members. The ARC leadership team made a hybrid presentation on the goals and achievements of our committee, by putting these in the context of the larger PACHRED vision in fostering equity, inclusion, and decolonization at Brock. Brad Clarke, Associate VP, Students, also made a presentation on the genealogy of PACHRED, dating back to the Human Rights Commission in the early 2010s. ARC engaged the public in attendance who asked questions, while catered food was being served. Provost Dr. Arja Vainio Mattila was also in attendance as an honored invitee representing SAC.
2. ARC worked on enhancing the organization, efficiency and power dynamic for the committee.
3. We developed a TOR to create guidelines by which the committee would operate. This was a process that invited feedback and suggestions from members. We held discussions during team meetings and carried the document to its last stages. Formal adoption is expected in early Fall 2025. A budget tracker template was also created, and a sub-committee for generating research and coordinating events were also identified as priorities for the 2025/2026 year. Student members have volunteered to participate in these committees and will be coordinating a summer arts-based event series.
4. ARC funds were used to purchase all materials needed for the arts-based workshop series and take-home embroidery kits, which will feature embroidery styles from around the world, beginning with Sashiko, a traditional Japanese technique focused on mending clothes. An invited host will teach basic embroidery skills, and participants will be welcome to return for follow-up drop-in sessions, designed to foster connection and creativity on campus during the quieter summer months.
5. ARC continued to provide financial support to groups which solicited aid. We also supported activities for BHM/AHM events organized on behalf of the HRE office (see “Black History/African Heritage Month” in the section above).
6. Regarding the Prioritization of staff equity hiring policies and practices within the Office of People & Culture, there is a big unknown. Given DEDI principles are clearly outlined in Pillar 4 of the University’s 5-year Strategic Plan, tangible results should materialize.

Presentations to SAC by BCFAB and ARC Members in the Fall of 2021 strongly emphasized setting up a body to assess progress (or lack thereof) of recommendations. Nothing has been done by SAC in that regard. The university is encouraged to support ongoing engagement with Black stakeholders at Brock, to seek their input in establishing a clear plan on how to achieve this goal.

What were the challenges?

1. We had hoped to support an Anti-Racism in Health Care event to be hosted by the FAHS. For various organizational reasons (including lapse in communication), ARC was unable to support this event, despite follow up efforts on our part.
2. Due to shifting priorities within the committee, action was not taken on a previous ARC goal of ensuring Brock mental health and academic advising supports are fully equipped to support the lived realities of students, especially those from equity-deserving groups.
3. Mapping a well thought out strategy addressing gaps – campuswide – in the implementation of EDID policies, via an enforceable employment equity policy, is still a challenge.

Lessons Learned

Continued advocacy through education and learning is key to any meaningful change in belief systems, and they benefit all parts of the academic community. Therefore, continuous consultation, dialogue, and collaboration between all levels of academic society is key to progress within our university.

Goals for 2025/26

In addition to the development of subcommittees, ARC aims to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure that institutional knowledge and the responsibilities of committee chairs are clearly documented and easily accessible. This will support transparency, provide continuity for incoming chairs, and facilitate a smooth transition for each of the three Co-Chairs.

On behalf of the Office of the Vice-President, Research (OVPR), Syna will continue to run EDI professional learning sessions across campus. Through the CRC program and their grant portfolio, the Research Enterprise is committed to ensuring that EDI requirements are met for awards with internal adjudication components. Most recently, the OVPR co-facilitated inclusive adjudication sessions focused on the experiences of Indigenous scholars. In partnership with the Human Rights & Equity Office (HREO), the OVPR also ran training for student researchers on fostering inclusive research environments and embedding EDI principles into research design.

Concurrently, we will invite Deans of the different Faculties to present what their faculties are doing to advance anti-racism initiatives within their departments; have a discussion with them around barriers at the faculty level regarding Anti-Racism/EDI programming and how ARC can support them realize tangible actions.

Recommendations to the President

The collection and dissemination of self-identification data for students and employees is very important, to be able to identify and address systemic barriers within the institution. Brock should support this process and designate clearly which organization on campus will be responsible for setting up this mechanism, and the body responsible for monitoring its follow-up.

Support for hiring Indigenous/BPOC counsellors and access to diverse mental health services at Brock (student presentations were made to Brock President Lesley Rigg at Sankey Chamber in the fall 2023):

We recommend that Brock allocate funds for the creation of *new Indigenous and BPOC Counsellor positions*. We understand that “some” progress has been made with the presence of one black counsellor, but this is only a drop in the bucket, given the need for hiring racialized and Indigenous counselors. The vision for this mission needs to be trauma-informed and ensure that it works for marginalized Indigenous and BPOC students. Funds need to be programmed in the Brock budget and allocated in a timely manner as *this is an urgent need*.

We reiterate the *importance of having academic and guidance counsellors from racially diverse backgrounds*. Representation matters: lived experiences help to create a bridge and understanding between students and those who provide this kind of support. Therefore, diversifying mental health supports is very important: in fact, diversity amongst counsellors is critical for understanding the lived experiences of BIPOC students and for creating a sense of comfort and belonging for them. There is strong support within the Brock community for encouraging the hiring of counselling and advising staff who reflect the student population and for providing a more diversified staff complement. Hence, *Brock should include the hiring of such staff across all faculties at Brock: a Black Academic Advisor, an Indigenous Academic Advisor, and an Asian Academic Advisor would be a good a start*.

We advocate for *holding a series of roundtable discussions with SAC concerning how to develop collaboration to create meaningful Anti-Racist systemic change at Brock*. The following issues would need to be addressed: identify what is happening in each Faculty to promote Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization; how the Anti-Racism Committee can work with SAC towards collaborative approaches; establishing the Processes and Timeline for developing equitable employment policies for BIPOC staff; designate who can be involved in *designing and implementing a multi-layered Promotion and Retention strategy of Black faculty and staff*. *Of paramount importance is putting in place a mechanism ensuring Accountability and Consistent Follow Up on the part of Senior Administration*.

Create a Special Fund dedicated to “celebrating and elevating” year-round contributions of BIPOC students, faculty, and staff in February, during Black History/African Heritage Month and beyond.

For Brock university as an institution, being EDI-inclusive is an attainable goal. One example stands out in support of EDI. For instance, Brock can emulate what the University of Toronto has achieved: they are so far ahead in the game that no institution in Canada matches the kind

of EDID policies they are implementing across their university. This shows that when EDI is respected (by being inclusive, diverse and understanding the cores values of the institution), every other aspect benefits: there are better educational outcomes, as indicated by the new research activities which are blossoming at University of Toronto. It is very important to stay strong on these arguments at the faculty level at Brock, in any program design, decision-making discussion where funding cuts are happening.

Decolonization Working Group

Faculty Chair: Lyn Trudeau

Committee Members

Sheila Cote-Meek; Tamara El-Hoss; Koreen McCullough; Xiaoyang Xia; Rabia Choudhary; David Yesaya; Kennedy Hance; Muskaan Waraich

Introduction

Working under the umbrella of PACHRED, the Decolonization Working Group seeks to uphold Indigenous values and traditional teachings while traversing an academic setting; however, we also recognize that decolonization may have a variety of meanings within marginalized communities. Our hope is to contribute to providing a decolonial lens that lifts up Indigenous peoples while acknowledging that many of our relations also experience oppression in an unequal settler colonial society.

Meetings

- October 3, 2024 (virtual)
- November 25, 2024 (virtual)
- January 22, 2025 (virtual)
- January 27, 2025 (virtual)
- February 5, 2025 (virtual)
- February 11, 2025 (virtual)
- April 28, 2025 (in-person)

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

The Decolonization Working Group supports the work of PACHRED in the priority areas highlighted above, including support for educational work on Israel/Palestine; support for a new 2SLGBTQ+ student centre and for the Black Student Success Centre, and highlighting the challenges facing international students. We believe that decolonization efforts benefit all marginalized people as well as inform Brock's overall learning environment.

Specific to our mandate, we prioritized responding to events that gave a platform to residential school denialism and other anti-Indigenous content. We believe that it is crucial for Indigenous responses to these events be given voice.

Following from recommendations last year, we also continued to support education efforts about the disproportionate criminalization of Indigenous Peoples.

Action Items

Our first event was a presentation by Edna Campos, Oct. 12th, 2024, an Indigenous Justice Support Worker for people who have been affected by the criminal justice system. Campos spoke about the impact of the *Gladue Report* and the process through which Indigenous people are disproportionately criminalized in Canada. She delved into the ways criminalization impacts families and communities and the ripple effects of victimization and the failures of representation in this area. We believe that holding space for dialogue is key to thinking more complexly about decriminalization. This event was open to everyone at Brock as well as the Niagara region.

Our second event held space to learn about the intergeneration impacts of residential schools on Indigenous faculty and the ways this legacy informs their teaching and scholarly practices. These conversations acknowledged historical injustices but also spoke to resiliency, the impacts on communities, and how they weave their own stories into their work.

Community Outreach/Events

- **Monday, October 12, 2024:** Indigenous Justice: Gladue Report, held at Pond Inlet from 12pm to 2pm (Guest: Indigenous Justice Support Worker, Edna Campos)
- **Thursday, March 6, 2025:** Narratives of Healing, Resilience, and Hope: Residential School Stories and Impacts, held at PLZ 600F from 4pm to 6pm (Panelists: Dr. Lyn Trudeau; Matthew Mackenzie; Dr. Sheila Cote-Meek; Dr. Joshua Manitowabi)

Lessons Learned

We learned/relearned that we must keep pressing on with this work for the seven generations coming. We learned that there is still a lot to be done given efforts to dismiss and/or falsify our histories that continue in educative spaces. Conversely, we also learned that students are eager to learn and to witness Indigenous truth telling and that we are continuing to garner support from colleagues who also want to confront overt anti-Indigenous racism.

What progress has been made?

Last year our we highlighted the disproportionate criminalization of Indigenous people. This year we were fortunate to continue with that work and hosted an event on residential school denialism that was well-received. The room was full with a waiting-list.

Note: An action item from this group's report in 20/21 was to "Open dialogue on anti-Indigenous attitudes on campus". We believe this still must be addressed by all levels of the university as anti-Indigenous racism is becoming more normalized.

What were the challenges?

We face a clear challenge when anti-Indigenous racism is provided a platform under the banner of academic freedom and a visiting guest speaker attempts to misrepresent and erase our

histories. This kind of event affects impacts all Indigenous Peoples at Brock (students, staff, faculty, Elder's) and ripples out to our communities.

Goals for 2025-2026

The coming year we plan to keep moving forward with efforts that counter residential school denialism and other anti-Indigenous sentiment. We also hope to include other marginalized voices in overall decolonial efforts that support unity and solidarity in the context of increasingly disturbing shifts in public discourse.

Recommendations

- We recommend further funding to assist in challenging anti-Indigenous movements across campus.
 - We recommend, as a first step that Brock's leadership begin a process of increasing the visibility of Indigenous peoples on campus through ensuring representation through artwork and creative visuals.
 - We recommend that Brock's leadership engage/intervene to challenge anti-Indigenous events across campus – particularly those promoting residential school denialism.
-

Employment Equity Working Group

Staff Co-Chair: Mary Montgomery

Student Co-Chair: Ben Johnson

Committee Members

Alana Lowe, Aryan Purkayastha, Daniel Oguejiofor, Sandra Kroeker, Wanda Gilmore

Introduction

The Employment Equity Working Group (EEWG) advises the President of Brock University and the President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity, and Decolonization (PACHRED) on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in employment. Acting as a critical resource, the EEWG provides expertise and analysis on areas such as performance assessment, workplace culture, workload, and scheduling.

The group works to identify and address barriers to equitable employment practices, propose improvements, and promote initiatives that foster an inclusive and supportive work environment. Through collaboration, resource development, and ongoing evaluation, the EEWG supports the university's commitment to employment equity and compliance with best practices and legislation. Members of the EEWG provide a very wide range of expertise, and the issues discussed at EEWG meetings are relevant to all PACHRED's other working groups.

Meetings

- January 28, 2025: Meeting with co-chairs and HRE staff
- February 25, 2025: All members meeting
- March 27, 2025: All members meeting

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

- Research Assistant wage disparity compared to other universities.
- Concerns among staff about declining morale, increased workloads, and job quality.

Both items illustrate how economic, labour, and equity struggles are interconnected. Low RA wages are not just about pay; they reflect broader systemic inequities that impact access to education, professional development, and future opportunities, especially for marginalized groups. Similarly, staff concerns about morale, workloads, and job quality are not isolated workplace issues, they are linked to broader patterns of institutional underfunding, inequality, and the emotional toll of carrying multiple, often invisible burdens.

Together, these concerns show that addressing one issue (like wages or workloads) without recognizing its connections to broader systemic inequities would be incomplete.

Community Outreach/Events

April 16, 2025: Research Assistant Networking Drop-In Event.

- A representative from the Office of the Vice-President, Research attended for part of the event and provided insights by giving a speech and engaging in discussion.
- The Office of the Vice-President, Research offered support for these events going forward.

April 22, 2025 - Employment Equity Panel Discussion.

- A panel discussion with the provost, union presidents, and AP staff, emphasized the need for collective advocacy, better resource allocation, improved transparency, and structural reforms to align employees lived experiences with the University's stated values.
- Attendees agreed that continued dialogue and that innovative collaboration across departments, students, and administration are essential to building a more supportive and cohesive campus environment.

Lessons Learned

This year, the Employment Equity Working Group learned that strong leadership and consistent engagement are critical to maintaining momentum and achieving goals. Rebuilding after a lull required intentional planning, clear communication, and renewed collaboration among members. It also became clear that issues such as wages, workload, and workplace culture are deeply interconnected, and addressing them requires a holistic, long-term approach rather than isolated actions. The group recognized the importance of early outreach, broad member recruitment, and structured guidance (like a Terms of Reference) to sustain participation and ensure that efforts are aligned with broader institutional commitments to equity and inclusion.

What progress has been made?

Despite a slow start, the Employment Equity Working Group made meaningful progress after appointing new co-chairs in January 2025. The group reestablished regular meetings, reviewed past work, and drafted a Terms of Reference to provide clearer structure moving forward. The events hosted this semester, helped surface critical concerns about low RA wages, staff morale, workloads, and broader equity challenges. These discussions laid the groundwork for continued advocacy, deeper collaboration with the Provost's and Vice-President of Research's Offices, and future research initiatives aimed at addressing systemic inequities in employment practices at Brock University.

What were the challenges?

This year, our working group faced challenges related to low membership numbers and limited engagement.

Goals for 2025-2026

- Widely circulate a call for new members in September.
- Conduct research into the historical data and current trends regarding Research Assistant wages and workloads.
- Continue collaboration with the Provost's Office.
- Advise on the creation and distribution of a Brock census to help guide the work of the Employment Equity Working Group.
- Host an event specifically for non-unionized staff.

Recommendations

- **Support a Comprehensive Review of Research Assistant Compensation:** Initiate a formal review comparing Research Assistant wages and workloads at Brock to sector standards, and prioritize strategies to ensure fair, competitive compensation.
 - **Invest in Staff Morale and Workload Management:** Commit resources to address staff concerns about morale, workload, and job quality, recognizing their direct impact on the University's ability to fulfill its mission.
 - **Enhance Transparency and Communication:** Improve communication about decision-making processes and institutional priorities, particularly regarding employment equity and resource allocation, to foster greater trust and engagement among employees.
 - **Formalize Representation for Administrative Professional Staff:** Explore the establishment of a formal representative body or leadership position for administrative professional (AP) staff, like existing structures for unionized employees.
 - **Prioritize Employment Equity Initiatives:** Actively support the Employment Equity Working Group's initiatives, including the launch of a Brock census, and ensure employment equity is embedded in institutional planning and accountability frameworks.
 - **Support Collaboration Between the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Research Assistants:** The collaboration that started this year is promising and can enable effective problem-solving with respect to the challenges faced by research assistants.
-

Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVP)

Chair: Dr. Angela Book

HRE Resource Person: Katie Keays

Members

Athena Colman, Aishah Sonekan, Alison Rothwell, Amanda Villella, Amanda Ziegler, Curtis Fogel, Catharine Pelletier, Donna Moody, Hijin Park, Julie Fennell, Katie Pickles, Krista Hilton, Leigh Harold, Michael Savage, Natalee Caple, Snezana Ratkovic, Tassia Gabbodon, Aayushi Vasava, Jenna Meier, Heidi Huber, Fatma Asdemir, Mariana Garrido de Castro, Sandra Kroeker, Rabia Choudhary, Brittany Gallant, Carleigh Charlton, Rox Chwaluk, Shadae Brown, Grace May, Moyo Babalola, Alyssa Raab, Taylor Court, Steph Kravcik, Avinder Saini

Introduction

The Brock University Sexual Violence Prevention Committee is an advisory committee with the purpose of identifying and recommending strategies to improve Brock's policies and processes in relation to sexual violence awareness, prevention and response.

Meetings

- October 9th, 2024
- February 14th, 2025
- April 28th, 2025

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee aligned its efforts with PACHRED's 2024–25 thematic focus on intersectionality, guided by Audre Lorde's reminder that "There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." Recognizing the interconnected nature of identities and oppressions, we structured our work through three dedicated working groups: one focused on the recently updated Sexual Violence Policy, another on supporting the December 6th memorial event, and a third on Pride Weeks. These focus areas allowed us to address gender-based violence from multiple angles, policy, remembrance, and queer inclusion, reflecting our commitment to an intersectional approach to sexual violence prevention and response. Our collaborative model allowed us to centre diverse perspectives and begin early conversations about continuous policy improvement, while also building partnerships across campus communities.

Action Items

In response to the priorities identified by the committee, several action items were carried out through our three working groups. Mid-year, following a change in leadership, the Policy

Working Group shifted its strategy. Rather than requesting an early review of the updated Sexual Violence Policy, we focused on deepening our feedback and analysis of the policy. This approach will allow us to enter future review processes with a more thorough, well-informed foundation.

The December 6th Memorial Working Group organized a commemorative event to honour the women whose lives were taken at École Polytechnique. The event welcomed over 20 attendees and featured a moving poetic performance, along with powerful reflections from Taylor Court, Brock's Gender and Sexual Violence Support and Education Coordinator.

The Pride Weeks Working Group partnered closely with Brock Pride to co-create a lineup of events that reflected the community's priorities and celebrated 2S & LGBTQIA+ experiences. Events included "Puppies for Pride" (in collaboration with SWAC), a workshop on healthy asexual relationships, and a Pride Prom to foster queer joy and connection. This work was grounded in community consultation, with our team meeting with Brock Pride leadership to bring their vision to life.

Additionally, the committee remained committed to broadening its reach and membership. Through collaborative outreach with the GSV team during tabling events, we welcomed six new members this year.

Community/Outreach Events

- Remembering December 6th, December 6th, 2025
- Puppies for Pride, March 25th, 2025
- Asexual and Aromantic Workshop: Navigating Different Types of Healthy Relationships, March 26th, 2025
- Pride Prom, April 4th, 2025

Lessons Learned

This year highlighted the importance of flexibility, collaboration, and intentional relationship-building in sustaining effective sexual violence prevention efforts. When we experienced a change in leadership mid-year, our group adapted by reassessing our approach to the policy work, which taught us the value of pacing ourselves and investing time in developing well-rounded, thoughtful feedback. This shift allowed us to slow down and strengthen our internal processes without losing momentum.

Through our Pride Weeks collaboration with Brock Pride, we were reminded that community-driven work is most impactful when it is grounded in listening. By asking Brock Pride what they envisioned for the week and then supporting those ideas, we helped co-create events that were meaningful, well-attended, and rooted in queer joy. This reaffirmed our commitment to centering the voices of those most affected by the work.

The December 6th memorial reminded us of the power of reflection and remembrance in community. It reinforced how storytelling, art, and gathering can be acts of resistance and healing in the face of gender-based violence.

Finally, our success in recruiting new members emphasized that visibility and personal engagement matter. Being present at outreach events and inviting people into the work face-to-face was key to growing the committee in a way that feels sustainable and grounded.

What progress has been made?

This year, the committee made meaningful progress on several current and ongoing priorities. While we initially hoped to request an early review of the updated Sexual Violence Policy, the shift in our approach has positioned us well for future engagement. By taking time to deepen our understanding and strengthen our feedback, we are laying the groundwork for more informed and effective contributions when the formal review process begins.

Our work to support and grow commemorative programming continued with the successful organization of the December 6th memorial. Building on past years, we were able to offer a thoughtful event that combined creative expression, community gathering, and reflection on gender-based violence.

In terms of supporting 2S & LGBTQIA+ students, this year marked an expansion of our engagement through Pride Weeks. Working alongside Brock Pride allowed us to bring new, community-informed events to life, including Pride Prom and a workshop on healthy asexual relationships, areas not previously addressed through this committee's programming.

Finally, our efforts to grow the committee have paid off. Through consistent outreach and collaboration with the GSV team, we welcomed six new members this year, supporting one of our long-standing goals of increasing engagement and bringing more voices to the table.

Challenges

This year, one of our primary challenges was navigating a change in leadership mid-year when our Chair was no longer able to continue in the role. While the committee responded with flexibility and collaboration, this transition required us to pause and reassess some of our original plans, particularly our approach to policy engagement. While ultimately productive, this shift delayed some of our initial timelines and required additional coordination and communication among members.

Another challenge was balancing capacity with ambition. Our committee often operates with limited time and resources, and while we were able to support multiple initiatives, including the December 6th memorial and Pride Weeks programming, coordinating across working groups and supporting events required significant effort from a small number of active members. This underscored the importance of our recruitment efforts, which we began addressing through tabling and outreach.

Lastly, like many volunteer-based groups, we faced occasional difficulties in maintaining consistent engagement throughout the year. Competing demands on members' time sometimes affected meeting attendance and continuity of working group participation. That said, the commitment and creativity of those who were able to stay involved carried our work forward in meaningful ways.

Goals for 2025/26

Looking ahead, the committee plans to continue building on the foundation laid this year. A key priority will be finalizing and submitting our refined feedback on the Sexual Violence Policy in preparation for the next formal review process. We hope to ensure that this feedback reflects an intersectional lens and the diverse experiences of campus community members.

We also aim to expand our programming and advocacy efforts related to commemorative and awareness events. This includes continuing our support for the December 6th memorial and exploring additional opportunities to engage the campus community in dialogue around gender-based violence, remembrance, and resilience.

Strengthening our relationships with campus partners, particularly student groups, will remain a central goal. We plan to deepen our collaboration with Brock Pride and other equity-deserving groups to ensure our work continues to be community-informed and responsive.

Finally, we will continue our focus on increasing committee membership and engagement. We hope to establish more intentional pathways for new members to get involved and to offer more consistent opportunities for contribution, especially through our working group model.

Recommendations

Support Ongoing Policy Implementation and Review

We recommend continued support for meaningful engagement with the Sexual Violence Policy, including dedicated opportunities for consultation with students, staff, and faculty. A regular and transparent review process that incorporates community feedback, particularly from equity-deserving groups, is essential to building trust and ensuring the policy remains responsive to the needs of all campus members.

Invest in Intersectional Gender-Based Violence Prevention Work

We encourage the President to prioritize and fund programming that addresses the intersectional nature of gender-based violence. Initiatives that centre the experiences of 2S & LGBTQIA+ students, racialized communities, international students, and students with disabilities are vital to building a safer and more inclusive campus.

Appendices

Appendix One

PACHRED International Student Working Group Briefing Document

Date: July 2025

Background & Overview

On January 30th, 2025, the President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity and Decolonization (PACHRED) hosted an event titled "**Challenging Racism and Xenophobia Targeting International Students: *Law, Media, and Activist Resistance.***"

The event was co-sponsored by the Anti-Racism Committee, the Social Justice & Equity Studies MA Program, the Social Justice Research Institute, and the Center for Women's and Gender Studies. It brought together a panel of scholars, activists, alumni and students to shed light on systemic inequities faced by international students within Canadian post-secondary institutions.

The event featured keynote speaker Dr. Vasanthi Venkatesh, Chair of the Transnational Law and Racial Justice Network at Windsor University's Faculty of Law. Drawing from her legal scholarship and community-based work, Dr. Venkatesh outlined how international students, particularly those from the Global South, are positioned within Canada's neoliberal education and immigration systems. In Canada, the state has been withdrawing financial support for education. Canada ranks 44th in the world in terms of percentage of GDP spent on education, at around 5.5%, behind Bhutan, South Africa, Brazil, and even the United States. Ontario ranks fifth among all provinces for post-secondary education expenditure and on a per-student basis, and has spent less money on post-secondary education than any other province for 43 of the last 45 years.

In this context, Venkatesh highlighted the ways international students are often seen not as learners but as revenue sources, paying three to four times the tuition of domestic students and supporting a post-secondary system increasingly reliant on their financial contributions. She noted that provincial disinvestment in post-secondary education, especially in Ontario, has created a vacuum filled by international tuition dollars, without the corresponding support structures. In addition, the ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has increasingly privatized their workforce and is shifting the rules for VISA, work permits, PR applications at such a rapid rate that even she, as a law professor, cannot keep track of the proliferation of changes. However, international students *must* navigate this quickly changing landscape or it will have extremely damaging consequences for them.

Joining Dr. Venkatesh was Navjot Salaria, an international student alumna from York University and organizer with the Naujawan Support Network. Navjot spoke candidly about the exploitation and precarity experienced by international students, especially in relation to unjust employment practices, lack of access to benefits, and increasingly restrictive immigration policies. Her

remarks focused on how recent federal caps on post-graduate work permits and the temporary suspension of permanent residency pathways have left thousands of students across Ontario vulnerable to undocumented status, sudden healthcare loss, and deportation.

Taken together, these contributions painted a stark picture of the structural conditions affecting international students—conditions that extend beyond campus and intersect with broader systems of labour, migration, policing, and colonialism. Student and alumni respondents Tiffany Muhindi (Political Science) and Kaho Nishibu (Sociology) drew on examples from Brock to highlight how international students often experience support services as fragmented and misaligned with their lived realities. While Brock has centralized international student services, many students still face difficulties navigating a complex institutional landscape. This underscores the need to improve coordination and responsiveness across the university, rather than placing the burden solely on students or individual departments.

Purpose of the Working Group

The International Students Working Group (ISWG) has been established within PACHRED to address the systemic barriers and inequities facing international students at Brock University. The working group will take an explicitly anti-racist, decolonial, and intersectional approach to improving institutional support structures, policy development, and student wellbeing. This group recognizes that international students are not a monolithic population, and their experiences are shaped by multiple factors including race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic background, immigration status, and language. It also acknowledges that international students often navigate their education while contending with legal precarity, exploitative labour conditions, cultural and racial isolation, and at times, direct threats to their safety and survival.

The goals of the working group include:

- Identifying systemic gaps in university policies and services that impact international students.
- Building mechanisms for institutional accountability and long-term change.
- Helping to strengthen coordination between existing units that serve international students, such as International Services, SWAC, HRE, and Student Life, by identifying barriers and opportunities for collaboration.
- Advocating for training, resources, and educational programs that are culturally responsive, and trauma informed.
- Centering international student voices, leadership, and lived experiences in decision-making.

Priority Issues Identified

Based on insights shared at the January 30th event and ongoing consultation, the working group will prioritize the following focus areas in its initial phase:

Immigration & Legal Precarity:

International students are required to navigate a rapidly changing legal environment in which visa, work permit, and permanent residency rules are constantly shifting. These changes can have devastating and immediate impacts, including the risk of undocumented status, healthcare loss, and deportation. While International Services staff are often responsive and helpful, they are under-resourced given the volume and urgency of student needs.

Action Areas

- Increase staff capacity and training to respond to immigration-related crises
- Create clear, centralized resources to help students stay informed of changes.
- Promote accessible information on common immigration pathways used by international students
- Develop centralized materials outlining available immigration supports and timelines.
- Support proactive advocacy efforts that challenge harmful IRCC policies.

Work Exploitation and Economic Vulnerability

There is a problematic stereotype that suggests that most international students are wealthy. This is true for a minority, but most come from middle class families and need to work to pay tuition and support themselves. Indeed, the assumption that international students are inordinately wealthy is most effectively challenged by an international student national survey which found that 79% of international students worried about the ability to afford housing (Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2018, p. 8 cited in Park and Francis, 2024 p. 6: <https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v53i3.16855>). In this context, students are limited by strict work-hour caps and risk of immigration penalties. These limitations, combined with racial and legal precarity, make them more vulnerable to wage theft, harassment, and other forms of exploitation.

Action Areas

- Shift the culture and role of International Services from rule enforcement to student advocacy.
- Develop and share resources on labour rights for international students.
- Build referral networks to local labour justice organizations.

Culturally Inaccessible Mental Health and Equity Services

International students often report that counselling intake processes are alienating, and mental health professionals lack cultural competence around xenophobia and gendered and racialized

experiences of migration. Students may not know where to turn, especially when facing gender-based violence, queer/transphobia, or cultural stigma.

- Review and revise SWAC intake processes for cultural accessibility.
- Increase training for SWAC staff and Counsellor of Choice participants on international student realities.
- Strengthen internal referrals between International Services, HRE, and other support services.

TERMS OF REFERENCE: PACHRED International Student Working Group (ISWG)

Brock University

Draft for review September 2025

Mandate

- To provide expertise, lived experience, analysis, and recommendations to the President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity, and Decolonization (PACHRED) to advise the President on issues affecting international students at Brock University.
- To address systemic racism, xenophobia, and the structural marginalization of international students across policy, service delivery, and campus culture.
- To strengthen equity-informed, trauma-responsive, and culturally accessible supports for international students navigating challenges related to immigration, work exploitation, legal precarity, and social isolation.
- To center intersectional and decolonial frameworks in understanding the specific and compounding challenges faced by international students, including racialized, queer/trans, and low-income migrants.
- To act as a collaborative hub that brings together students, staff, faculty, and community members in identifying needs, developing programs, and sharing best practices for international student equity.

Membership

- Meetings are open to members of the Brock community who support the group's mandate, including international students, alumni, staff, faculty, and allies.
- The working group prioritizes the inclusion of international students with lived experience and staff/faculty who bring relevant expertise in migration, equity, mental health, and decolonial practice.
- The group may include representatives from:

- International Services
 - Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre (SWAC)
 - Human Rights and Equity Office (HRE)
 - BUSU and GSA
 - Brock International student clubs and advocacy groups
 - Relevant faculty (e.g. from Social Justice & Equity Studies, Sociology, Political Science etc.)
- Meeting attendance is optional to list, and participants are not required to disclose any personal or immigration information.

Chairing

- The working group is co-chaired by one international student (undergraduate or graduate) and one staff or faculty member.
- Co-chairs are selected by the working group or appointed through a collaborative nomination process.
- Terms for co-chairs are typically one year, with the possibility of renewal.

Meeting Schedule

- The group typically meets once every 4–6 weeks during the fall and winter terms.
- Meeting frequency may increase during periods of active programming or urgent response.

The ISWG reports regularly to PACHRED and may present recommendations or updates as needed.

Contact information

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