

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

Executive Summary

2025-2026

Collaboratively Submitted by PACHRED Executive Members:
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Introduction

We are proud to submit this final report on the work of PACHRED during another challenging year. Over 2025-2026, the university sector has experienced significant upheaval, including continuing austerity and budget constraints, increased layoffs within academic units and among both unionized and non-unionized staff, all within an increasingly polarized political environment. At the same time, global conflicts and crises have had profound and immediate impacts on the lived experiences of our students and our broader university community.

In this context, the values PACHRED was created to uphold are not only under pressure but, in many instances, are being directly and profoundly challenged. We believe passionately that universities must remain spaces that safeguard academic freedom and foster critical engagement with complex issues within higher education, across Turtle Island, and globally. Brock's research culture and community are deeply interconnected at local, national, and international levels, and these connections shape both our responsibilities and our decolonial commitments.

The following report provides an overview and an archive of our work in response to this difficult and consequential historical moment.

PACHRED's thematic focus for 2025-26 continued 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 2025-2026 PACHRED has prioritized responding to the following:

- 1. Equity for International Students** – Addressing immigration/legal precarity, work exploitation, and access to culturally responsive services.
- 2. Responding to Residential School Denialism** – Supporting Indigenous-led truth-telling, education, and campus visibility initiatives.
- 3. Solidarity for Palestine** – Hosting events and collaborations that foreground anti-colonial perspectives, solidarity efforts, and critical dialogue on the genocide in Gaza.
- 4. Higher Education Funding Crisis** – Advocating for sustainable funding models that protect equity, diversity, and inclusion commitments at Brock.

Overall we remain committed to engaging in activism and education as practices that can build relationships, solidarity, and movements towards more equitable and decolonial futures.

PACHRED Workflow

The PACHRED Executive met on a weekly basis throughout the fall and winter terms and bi-weekly or monthly in the summer and the PACHRED Coordinating Committee met monthly

during the fall and winter terms. The work of the Executive includes preparing new members through an orientation, hosting events that align with PACHRED priority areas, supporting working group initiatives, and providing feedback on the EDID strategic plan and related initiatives throughout the year. The Executive and the Coordinating Committee have met once per term with the President and more often with the AVP EDI to discuss pressing concerns including Islamophobia and antisemitism, the challenges facing international students, and the impact of budget cuts on staffing and broader EDI efforts. In 2026 President Rigg attended the April general members PACHRED meeting to hear concerns and ideas directly from the membership and to provide her insights. Below we provide more details on these activities.

PACHRED Meetings

During the academic year there were six 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:

- September – Orientation for new members and discussion of 2025-2026 priorities
- October – Special event panel on *Antisemitism: Law, Justice, and Decolonization in a Time of Genocide*
- November – Special event speaker *Medicine on the Frontlines: Healthcare and Palestinian Statehood, An evening with Tarek Loubani*
- January – International Student Panel and Discussion
- March – Panel discussion with OSSTF/Professional staff/Faculty/GSA/CUPE offering reflections on austerity in higher education and the recent staff cuts at Brock
- April - Meeting with President Lesley Rigg and reports from PACHRED Working Groups. The September, January, March and April meetings were held in a hybrid environment.

Successes

1. Report on Challenges facing International Students: From March to August 2026
Xiaoyang Xia (PhD, Psychology) has been employed by the International Student Working Group and HREO to prepare a report on the challenges facing international students with actionable recommendations.
2. Under the leadership of Lyn Trudeau, the Decolonization Working Group, has continued to support events which provide eloquent responses to the platforming of residential school denialism at Brock.
3. PACHRED has collaborated with unionized and non-unionized staff at Brock to provide a series of initiatives and events which draw attention to the impact of austerity in higher education and the universities responsibility to undertake staff reductions and academic restructuring in ways that honour Brock's commitments to human rights, equity, and decolonization.
4. In our events on Palestine, we have developed a new collaboration with the Muslim Medical Association of Canada, Niagara Chapter. In collaboration with the SJRI, we look forward to deepening that partnership in ways that foreground the links between health and global decolonization in the future.

2SLGBTQ+ Working Group

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

- **QCommons Launch & Growth:** The QCommons digital resource hub, developed in the 2024–25 year, was officially launched and actively promoted through a social media strategy and community events. <https://www.qcommons.ca/>
- **Community Building Events:** The Working Group co-hosted two community building events this year: a fall event called “Weave the Rainbow” on November 6, 2025, and a Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV) event called “Play Proud: Celebrating Gender Diversity in Sport” on March 27, 2026. Weave the Rainbow event was held over 4 hours (midday) in Market Hall to reach a wide audience. The event was an art project, an act of solidarity, and a space for connection.
- **Play Proud: Celebrating Gender Diversity in Sport,** our winter event, was also a collaboration with several PACHRED Working Groups, the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Human Rights and Equity, Gender and Sexual Violence, and Brock Recreation. The event featured Harrison Browne, the first openly transgender athlete in professional hockey, and included an athlete panel with two non-binary Brock students, and a trans community member.
- **Cross-Working Group Collaboration:** The Working Group continued to build intersectional partnerships across PACHRED, collaborating with the Decolonization, Anti-Racism, and Sexual Violence Prevention Working Groups, as well as with the Brock Pride Club.
- **Advocacy for Institutional Supports:** The Working Group continued to advocate for a full-time 2S&LGBTQ+ staff advocate and increased access to queer-affirming mental health services on campus.

Anti-Ableism and Mental Health (AAMH)

Co-Chairs: Maureen Connolly (Faculty); Demi Perrotta (Staff - Until Dec. 2025); Ben Johnson (Student)

- AAMH advised on the Multi-year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) and have been advised that the MYAP is in process and on schedule. We advised the Director of Student Accessibility Services on the proposed changes to the Academic Accommodations Policy Review. This is an immensely important process with significant implications.
- The consultation was a relevant and meaningful couple of meetings for the graduate and undergraduate student members of AAMH, because the Director of SAS was sincere in her request for feedback and suggestions and the students felt that they could (and did) offer their honest concerns based in their learning experiences. The accommodation for student learning changes do not reflect all the concerns expressed by the students but do engage with issues relating to timing and efficiencies. Students appreciated the opportunity to offer input.

- AAMH hosted several successful events, which are elaborated on in more detail in the full report. These are International Day for Persons with Disabilities, Ability and Empowerment Day, Global Accessibility Awareness Day, and National Accessibility Awareness Week.
- AAMH collaborates with other working groups, notably, Employment Equity, and with several units on campus, most notably Research Services, who successfully facilitated several EDI based workshops for researchers wanting to fulfil the recent tri council expectations for accessibility and inclusion, and the Library, who have been leaders in incorporating inclusion-based practices “across the library”. We also collaborated with the BUFA equity committee on the development of an accessibility survey and facilitated a pilot for an Allyship workshop.

Anti-Racism Committee (ARC)

Co-Chairs: Janelle Joseph (faculty), Marla Terreberry-Portfilio (staff); Nwakerendu (Kay) Waboso (student)

The Anti-Racism Committee focused on growing its membership, learning about the experiences of racism and anti-racism of the committee members, and gathering to share ideas with anti-racist activists from across the country and across campus.

Three key community building and awareness events took place in February and March.

- First, the Anti-Racism Committee contributed to the annual Black History Month/African Heritage Month events through A Panel discussion and dinner on Thursday, February 26 2026 Documenting & Archiving Black Life, Work, & Scholarship: A Dialogue on Ethics & Practice to examine the protection of Black intellectual and creative labour.
- Second, The Anti-Racism Committee hosted a documentary screening and panel discussion based on the film *Sidelined: The Color of the Game* produced by Anti-Racism in Sport to discuss the structural barriers faced by First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Black, racialized and religious minority participants.
- Third, the Anti-racism Committee contributed to the *Play Proud: Celebrating Gender Diversity in Sport* event led by the 2SLGBTQ+ working group. The event featured a panel discussion, light dinner, and screening of a trailer for the *Pink Light* film.

Decolonization Working Group

Co-Chairs: Lyn Trudeau (Faculty) and Belicia Xochi Recinos Athanasas (Student)

The Decolonization Working Group wanted to keep countering residential denialism at the forefront of our work. Though collective and mindful planning we provided a workshop that not only addressed awareness but commitment to resist and respond to denialism when present personally, within Brock, and within greater society as an action-oriented event.

Moreover, we wanted to celebrate through inviting the Brock community and created space to honour Indigenous Peoples ways of being, the vibrancy and joyfulness held within our communities.

As such, we also hosted an event that held space for teachings and various forms of art (paintings, dance, poetry, art-based research, drumming and Indigenous catering) to honour allyship and good relations between all Peoples. We wanted to uphold a space full of remembering, witnessing and imagining together.

Employment Equity Working Group

Chair: Mary Montgomery (Staff)

The Employment Equity Working Group (EEWG) made significant progress this year in advancing equity at Brock University by identifying systemic barriers in hiring practices, strengthening engagement with institutional policies, and fostering dialogue on the broader structural forces shaping higher education.

The group emphasized that meaningful equity work requires structural change, not symbolic commitments, particularly in addressing limitations in traditional hiring metrics and gaps in inclusive training. A key priority was expanding the scope of equity to better include Administrative, Professional, and Exempt (AP&E) staff, who remain underrepresented and disconnected from support systems.

Through initiatives such as the “Stronger Together” speaker event, the EEWG also highlighted the impact of chronic government underfunding and neoliberal restructuring on equity efforts; however, the absence of senior administration at this event underscored ongoing challenges in leadership engagement and accountability.

While progress has been made through contributions to the Equity Census, Employment Equity Policy review, and Institutional Equity Action Plan, concerns remain regarding transparency, representation, and the need for stronger institutional commitment to implementing equity-focused recommendations.

International Student Working Group

Co-Chairs: Gökbörü Sarp Tanyildiz (Faculty), Parunchana Pacharn (Faculty), Aryan Purkayastha (Student)

Research Assistants: Anmol Rughani, Xiaoyang Xia

- We had four meetings in 2025-2026.
- We hosted one event, a panel discussion on January 20th, 2026.
- In our first year, our goal is to gather information and map our priorities. This has been done by reviewing current services and Canada-wide survey results. The ongoing project will continue in the summer.

Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVP)

Chair: Julie Fennel (staff)

The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee continued to prioritize intersectional and trauma-informed approaches to sexual violence prevention, education, and response throughout the 2025–2026 academic year.

Key initiatives included the December 6th Memorial Event, the Consent Carnival, the establishment of a Sexual Violence Policy Working Group, and the development of the Disclosure Dialogues initiative aimed at supporting faculty and staff in responding to student disclosures. The Consent Carnival in particular demonstrated strong community impact, with 96.9% of participants reporting an increased understanding of consent and healthy relationships, and 97.5% agreeing that such events contribute to a safer and more respectful campus environment.

Significant progress was also made toward a proactive review of the Sexual Violence Policy ahead of the formal 2027 review timeline, including early working group discussions and planning for broader campus consultation.

However, the Committee also faced challenges this year, including declining attendance and engagement among members and capacity constraints that impacted the pace of advancing longer-term initiatives alongside competing institutional responsibilities.

Recommendations for the President from PACHRED and Associated Working Groups

Additional details and notes around recommendations can be found in the main PACHRED Annual Report.

The 2S&LGBTQIA+ Working Group makes the following recommendations to the President for the 2026–2027 year:

1. Hire a Full-Time 2S&LGBTQ+ Advocate
2. A physical space for 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff and faculty
3. Institutional Support for QCommons
4. Increase Access to Queer-Affirming Mental Health Services
5. Facilitate Coalition Building and Intersectional Programming
6. Establish a Brock Pride Award (HREO-Led)

The AAMH Working Group makes the following recommendations to the President for the 2026–2027 year:

1. Follow the accessibility and inclusion policy and procedures already in place.

2. Take seriously the staggering demand on SAS and its cascade effect on teaching, learning, research, and overall university functioning.
3. Read and adhere to the recommended Post Secondary Standards, especially the formation of the university umbrella ‘accessibility committee’.
4. Engage seriously in discussions about institutional communication practices

The Anti-Racism Committee Working Group makes the following recommendations to the President for the 2026–2027 year:

1. Increase transparency on plans to improve hiring and retention of racialized staff.
2. Demonstrate accountability in responding to racialized (graduate and international) student needs.
3. Continue to provide financial and logistical support for community events to fund speaker fees, catering, and video/audio recording to produce an anti-racism awareness digital campaign.

The Decolonization Working Group makes the following recommendations to the President for the 2026–2027 year:

1. Increase visibility of Indigenous Days of Significance across campus as a broader university commitment (see Goals)
2. Commit to meaningful community engagement and inviting Indigenous community members to engage in university events, activities, and initiatives
3. Increase the presence of senior leaders at Indigenous focused events and activities across campus
4. funding to assist with anti-Indigenous movements across campus

The Employment Equity Working Group makes the following recommendations to the President for the 2026–2027 year:

1. Ensure accountability mechanisms remain strong, including maintaining direct advisory relationships with PACHRED.
2. Commit to meaningful implementation of the Employment Equity and Institutional Equity Action Plans, beyond symbolic measures.
3. Address gaps in representation on key committees to ensure diverse and equitable participation.
4. Expand inclusive hiring training across all employee groups.
5. Recognize and support non-unionized staff, including creating safe avenues for engagement.
6. Increase transparency in decision-making processes, particularly regarding external consultants and restructuring initiatives.

7. Invest in equity-focused programming and education, including events that connect institutional issues to broader systemic contexts.

The Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group makes the following recommendations to the President for the 2026–2027 year:

1. Support an early review of Brock University's Sexual Violence Policy in advance of the mandated 2027 review timeline.
2. Continue institutional investment in prevention education and community engagement initiatives related to consent, healthy relationships, and gender-based violence.
3. Support the implementation of trauma-informed disclosure response initiatives, including the proposed Disclosure Dialogues program for faculty and staff.
4. Encourage increased cross-campus participation and leadership engagement within the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee and its working groups.
5. Enhance awareness and accessibility of supports, accommodations, and reporting options related to gender-based and sexual violence.
6. Continue prioritizing intersectional and inclusive approaches within institutional policies, programming, and prevention efforts.
7. Ensure sustainable resourcing and operational support for gender-based violence prevention and response initiatives across campus.

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