

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

Annual Report
2025-2026

Collaboratively Submitted by PACHRED Executive Members:
Margot Francis, Andrew Bassingthwaighte, Nadia Ganesh

Brock University

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Introduction

We are proud to submit this final report on the work of PACHRED during another challenging year. Over the past year, the university sector has experienced significant upheaval, including budget constraings, increased layoffs within academic units and among both unionized and non-unionized staff, alongside 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 broader 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 commitments.

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

Thematic Focus for 2025/26

PACHRED's thematic focus for 2025/26 continues to be grounded in the insights of Audre Lorde, epitomized by her assertion: *"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."* Delivered in her 1982 address "Learning from the 60s," this statement remains especially resonant in the present moment.

Lorde's insight highlights the interconnected nature of the challenges faced by faculty, staff, and students within the post-secondary sector. These are not isolated pressures but overlapping and compounding realities that demand an integrated and critical response.

Guided by this framework, PACHRED's work recognizes that issues of colonialism, equity, academic freedom, labour, and global justice are deeply entangled. Our approach centres the understanding that meaningful engagement within the university must account for these intersections, particularly at a time when the values of inclusion, critical inquiry, and collective responsibility face heightened strain.

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.

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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 build relationships, solidarity, and movements towards more equitable and decolonial futures.

PACHRED Workflow

The PACHRED Executive continued to meet on a bi-weekly basis throughout the fall / winter and summer semesters 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 challenges faced by International students, the impact of budget cuts on staffing and EDI efforts, as well as the overall work of working groups.

In 2025-2026 President Rigg, met with members of the Executive team and Coordinating Committee twice (August & December) to discuss the work that PACHRED is conducting and to listen to concerns from the Executive and Working Group chairs.

President Rigg also attended one of the general PACHRED meetings in April to hear concerns and ideas directly from the PACHRED membership. This meeting also included updates about Brock's oveall budget and recent concerns around staffing issues presented by the Provost Dr. Arja Vainio-Mattila.

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:

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- **September 23rd** – Orientation for new members and discussion of 2025-2026 priorities
- **October 30th** – Event: *Antisemitism: Law, Justice, and Decolonization in a Time of Genocide* - We are pleased to welcome scholars associated with the Jewish Faculty Network, to share their perspectives - https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/306178
- **November 5th** – Event: *Medicine on the Frontlines: Healthcare and Palestinian Statehood* - Dr. Loubani is a Palestinian Canadian physician, an associate professor at the Schulich School of Medicine at Western University, and co-founder of GLIA, a global innovator of high-quality medical equipment operating on the principle that quality healthcare should be accessible to all - https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/307359
- **January 20th** – Panel event: International Student Perspectives / Brief updates from working groups
- **March 17th** – General meeting focused on current issues related to budget and lay offs at Brock.
- **April 7th** – 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

Website

This year, there was a significant update to the PACHRED website https://brocku.ca/president/pachred/ ensuring it meets accessibility standards and that working group information is made available for a wider audience.

Educational events and raising awareness

Consistent with our thematic focus for 2025/26, PACHRED hosted several events and public meetings on the priorities mapped out above. These Included

October 2025:

We were pleased to host a panel of scholars associated with the Jewish Faculty Network, as they considered the weaponization of antisemitism - at a time when actual antisemitism is surging dangerously and yet going unaddressed. ***Antisemitism: Law, Justice, and Decolonization in a Time of Genocide***, included Alejandro I. Paz, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Toronto who spoke about Israeli Settler-Colonialism After 1967 and the Emergence of the "New Antisemitism"; Sheryl Nestel, Sociologist, Affiliated Scholar, New College, University of Toronto who presented on The International Holocaust Remembrance Working Definition of Antisemitism: A Global Strategy to Silence Pro-Palestinian Speech and Jillian Rogin: Associate Professor, University of Windsor, Faculty of Law, Criminal

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Defense Lawyer who spoke about Pro-Israel Advocacy and Hate Speech Legislation in Canada. The event was held from 5-7pm on Thursday, Oct. 30th, 2025 in PLAZA 600F and the room was over-subscribed with 80 people in a room for 60. The event was co-sponsored by the Social Justice Research Institute; MA Program in Social Justice and Equity Studies; Indigenous Educational Studies; Centre for Women's and Gender Studies. https://brocku.ca/social-sciences/womens-studies/2025/10/09/antisemitism-law-justice-and-decolonization/.
For a very thoughtful article on the event see The Brock News: https://brockpress.com/jewish-faculty-network-panelists-discuss-the-harms-of-weaponizing-antisemitism-to-mean-anti-israel-amidst-the-ongoing-genocide-in-palestine/

November 2025:

Our next special event. ***Medicine on the Frontlines: Healthcare and Palestinian Statehood, an evening with Tarek Loubani*** took place on Wednesday, Nov. 5th, 7-9pm at the First Ontario Centre for the Performing Arts, in St. Catharines. Dr. Loubani is a Palestinian Canadian physician, an associate professor at the Schulich School of Medicine at Western Ontario University, and is co-founder of GLIA, a global innovator of high-quality medical equipment operating on the principal that quality healthcare should be accessible to all. For the past fifteen years Dr. Loubani has trained medical staff in Gaza and worked at Nasser Hospital this summer. He discussed the systemic destruction of Palestinian healthcare infrastructure in a time of genocide and how local-global alliances can build support for Palestinian life, sovereignty and statehood. The event was co-sponsored by the Social Justice Research Institute, Faculty for Palestine, the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, the MA in Social Justice and Equity Studies and Indigenous Educational Studies at Brock University and endorsed by the Niagara Movement for Justice in Palestine/Israel, 905 Palestine, Independent Jewish Voices, the Jewish Faculty Network, Silver Spire Church, the Muslim Medical Association of Canada (MMAC)—Niagara Chapter; and the Islamic Society of Niagara Peninsula. Dr. Loubani spoke to a large and appreciative audience from Brock University and the wider Niagara region, in particular people working in healthcare.
https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/307359; for a thoughtful article on the event see The Brock News: https://brockpress.com/medicine-as-resistance-how-dr-loubanis-sharing-of-his-experiences-in-gaza-became-a-battleground-for-academic-speech/

January 2026:

In it's regular meeting time, on January 20th, from 11-1pm PACHRED hosted a ***panel on the challenges facing international students*** moderated by Chana (Parunchana) Pacharn, who is the co-chair International Student Working Group, with presentations by graduate students and alumni Thuy Linh Dang (ADSP), Justin Mafie (AHS), Xiaoyang (Nick) Xia (PhD, Psychology), and Anmol Rughani (AHS). 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. Students spoke candidly about the exploitation and precarity they experienced and urged audience members to consider how university services could be more fully aligned with the lived realities students are navigating and the importance of challenging the broader discourses of xenophobia and racism that are enabling these intensifying challenges.

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February 2026:

On Tuesday, Feb. 24th from 12-2pm we co-hosted a keynote by Jenny Ahn (OCUFA Executive Director), a recognized expert on the impact of austerity in higher education. The event, ***Stronger Together: Solidarity for Brock's Future*** was co-hosted by BUFA, OSSTF, CUPE and the SJRI, and Ahn's talk provided a fulsome analysis to put the dramatic changes in staffing and academic restructuring at Brock in that broader context. https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/321495

March 2026:

On March 17th during its regular meeting slot from 11-1pm PACHRED hosted a ***panel on the challenges posted by austerity in higher education and the staff cuts at Brock University*** with contributions from OSSTF with Brad Sutherland (interim president) and Emily Hammond (communications); and from Mary Montgomery (former OSSTF VP) on possible cuts to professional staff; presentations on the impact of restructuring/cuts on departments and faculty with Chana Pacharn (Accounting and BUFA executive) and Fiona Hunter, (Chair, Biology); and by Kay Waboso (AHS), from the GSA, providing a presentation on the impact of restructuring/cuts on students; and from CUPE 4207, reflections on the impact of cuts from fall 2025 by Daniel Barnowski (CUPE 4207 President).

April 2026:

On April 6th, PACHRED and the SJRI co-hosted ***Vibrations from Gaza*** an award-winning 2023 documentary film directed by Rehab Nazzal in Sankey Chambers. The film explores the lives of deaf Palestinian children in the besieged Gaza Strip. Born and raised under siege and frequent onslaughts, these children, including Amani, Musa, Israa, and others, provide vivid accounts of their encounter with bombardment and the constant presence of drones in their sky. The children describe their perceptions of missiles strikes through sensing vibrations in the air, trembling of the ground, and the resonance of collapsing buildings. The film questions whether the deafness of these children is natural or a consequence of Israel's use of sonic weaponry, such as sonic booms. After the screening, the director, **Rehab Nazzal** (who joined us virtually from Bethlehem) was in conversation with **Norma Rantisi** (Concordia) who was with us in person, to discuss the film and its reception. Sankey Chambers was filled to capacity, and we provided a delicious Palestinian lunch. This event was also co-sponsored by SJRI, WGST, SJES, and the Muslim Medical Association of Canada – Niagara Chapter. https://brocku.ca/social-sciences/womens-studies/tag/films/

For events on Decolonization, see the report of the Decolonization Working Group, below.

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. Based on interviews with 22 Brock international students and recent alumni (700 pages of qualitative data) and the

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secondary literature in the field, the report will provide important insights and recommendations about best practices going forward.

2. Under the leadership of Lyn Trudeau, chair of the Decolonization Working Group, this committee 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.

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

As they come to the end of their terms of service on the Executive, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Margot Francis and Andrew Bassingthwaighte for their leadership, care, and sustained commitment to the work of PACHRED over the last 3 years. Through periods of significant institutional, political, and social challenge, both Francis and Bassingthwaighte helped guide the committee with a deep commitment to equity, human rights, decolonization, and collaborative engagement across the Brock community.

As Faculty Co-Chair, Dr. Francis has played a critical role in shaping work of PACHRED, helping to foreground issues connected to decolonization, trans and queer justice, international student precarity, and broader struggles against xenophobia and systemic inequity. Their leadership has helped foster spaces for critical dialogue, community education and activism, and scholarly engagement on some of the most pressing issues impacting the university and wider community. Through their work with faculty, students, staff, and community partners, Dr. Francis has consistently demonstrated a commitment to building thoughtful and courageous conversations grounded in relational accountability and social justice.

As Staff Co-Chair, Andrew Bassingthwaighte has provided steady leadership in supporting the ongoing operations, coordination, and development of PACHRED and its working groups. They

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have played an important role in strengthening communication across committees, supporting the development of terms of references, assisting with annual reporting processes, and helping to build connections between PACHRED, university administration and departments. Their commitment to collaborative leadership and inclusive practice has helped support an environment where students, staff, and faculty can engage meaningfully in advocacy and institutional change efforts.

The Executive also wishes to recognize the broader challenges associated with sustaining and growing PACHRED membership during a period of increasing workload pressures, institutional uncertainty, and broader political tensions surrounding equity and decolonization work across higher education. Recruiting new student, staff, and faculty members into volunteer-based equity work has become increasingly difficult as many members of the university community navigate burnout, precarious workloads, financial pressures, and the emotional labour often associated with justice-seeking work. These challenges have been particularly evident in efforts to recruit and retain student members whose leadership is essential to the future of PACHRED. Despite these realities, the nominations committee, led by Student Co-Chair, Nadia Ganesh is actively seeking new members and Co-Chairs for the 2026-2027 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.

We remain encouraged by the continued interest shown by members of the Brock community who believe deeply in the importance of this work and who continue to contribute their time, energy, and expertise toward creating a more equitable and inclusive university environment.

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, expertise, 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.

Additional recognition is also being provided to the following individuals for their continued work in support of PACHRED and ensuring that the work we do is accessible by the broader university community.

Zhane Hamilton –Executive Assistant HRE (now with Brock Conference Services)

Anmol Rughani – Research Assistant PACHRED / 2SLGBTQIA+ Working Group (Graduating 2026 with a Master of Public Health)

Can Kilic – Audio-Visual/Electronics Technologist

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2SLGBTQ+ Working Group

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

Research Assistant: Anmol Rughani

Web Designer: Caitlin Szczepanowski

Committee Members

Member names are not published to protect participant privacy. This year meetings ranged between 8-21 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 2025–2026 academic year marked an important year of consolidation and community-building following the work done in the previous year. With QCommons established and the referendum experience behind us, the Working Group focused on strengthening its digital presence, deepening partnerships, hosting meaningful events, and continuing to advocate for institutional supports that 2SLGBTQIA+ students urgently need.

This report reflects the Working Group's activities, learnings, challenges, and goals in connection with PACHRED's broader thematic focus, grounded in the words of Audre Lorde: "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."

Meetings

Working Group Meeting Dates

Working Group meetings were held online and/or in-person during the 2025–2026 academic year. The Co-Chairs also attended additional consultations and numerous planning meetings in preparation for events and advocacy initiatives.

- October 2, 2025 – Online:
  - Kick-off meeting. Working Group annual report summary, QCommons website overview and feedback, fall event planning, volunteer opportunities.
- October 30, 2025 – Hybrid:

  - November 6 event finalization, budget update, QCommons promotion strategies, social media strategy discussion.

- November 27, 2025 – Online:
  - Media coordinator update (Madison Badger), winter event brainstorming, discussion of December 1 meeting with President Rigg.

- February 12, 2026 – Online:
  - Panel composition, title, framing, budget, promotion strategy, and community connections.

- April 29, 2026 – Online:
  - Winter event recap, budget overview, feedback of annual report draft, and soliciting two new co-chairs for 2026-27.

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

In the 2024–25 Annual Report, the 2S&LGBTQIA+ Working Group made the following recommendations and established goals for 2025–26. Below is an account of how these were addressed:

- Continue to develop Q-Commons (digital space): Addressed. QCommons was officially launched this year with the guidance of Caitlin Szczepanowski. A social media strategy was also developed and led by a graduate student member. The website is being actively maintained and updated with resources, events, and community content.
- Lobby for additional supports, including a physical space, for 2SLGBTQIA+ students: Ongoing. Advocacy for a dedicated physical space and institutional supports continues (including supporting QCommons website and social media). This was raised with President Rigg in December 2025 and in April 2026.
- Design and host 2 events (one fall, one winter): Addressed. A fall community-building event was held on November 6, 2025. A winter event in support of Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV) was held on March 27, 2026.
- Increase capacity including membership and improve student engagement: Partially addressed. Several new members joined the October 2 meeting and after the fall event. Membership increased, in part, as a result of an article in the Brock News profiling the Working Group(s) and soliciting new memberships.
- Build partnerships with organizations, groups, and allies: Addressed. The Working Group collaborated with numerous on and off campus organizations and groups.
- Establish a Brock Pride Award: Reconsidered. After reflection, the Working Group recommends that a Brock Pride Award be established and led by the Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO), in consultation with the 2S&LGBTQIA+ Working Group and the Brock Pride Club. This would ensure the award has appropriate institutional backing, resources, and sustainability.

Action Items

The following action items were undertaken during the 2025–2026 academic year:

1. Launched and actively promoted QCommons, the 2S&LGBTQIA+ digital community and resource hub for Brock students, staff, and faculty. www.Qcommons.ca
2. Developed and implemented a social media strategy for QCommons and the Working Group.
3. QCommons-branded T-shirts to raise awareness and community visibility.
4. Planned and co-hosted a fall community-building event - Weave the Rainbow - on November 6, 2025.
5. Planned and co-hosted “Play Proud: Celebrating Gender Diversity in Sport” panel discussion on March 27, 2026.
6. Continued collaboration with PACHRED Working Groups, SWAC, and the Brock Pride Club and other groups.
7. Contributed to discussions and planning within PACHRED.

Community Outreach/Events

- October 21: Launch of Loud and Proud At The Hub
- November 6: Weave the Rainbow: statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/2/atp-safelinks.html
- March 2: Opening Reception Brock Pride Month https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/pride-2026-by-dr-pauli-gardner/ Co-Chair Pauli Gardner spoke at the opening reception in the Rankin Family Pavilion https://statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/2/atp-safelinks.html
- March 2 – 30: Supported numerous Pride Events
- March 27: Play Proud: Play Proud: Celebrating Gender Diversity in Sport:, 2026 https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/323396
- Upcoming – June: 4th Annual Speaking with Pride Professional Development and Networking Event (led by Jonathan Belgrave)

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.

Several important insights emerged from the Working Group’s activities this year:

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- **QCommons Promotion:** Building visibility for a new digital platform requires sustained, multi-channel promotion. The development of a dedicated social media strategy is an important first step forward. Ongoing effort and resources will be needed to grow the audience, update content regularly, and ensure the platform remains a living resource for the community.
- **Timing of Events:** Reflecting on 2024–25 Pride Week programming, the Working Group noted that events held in late March and early April can face lower engagement due to academic pressures and student burnout. Hosting a fall event in November 2025 responded to this insight. The Working Group should continue to consider optimal timing for future events.
- **Cross-Working Group Collaboration:** Collaboration with other PACHRED Working Groups and off campus organizations, particularly around both the Fall and Winter event, produced meaningful intersectional programming. These partnerships are a model for future events and initiatives.
- **Student and Community Framing:** In planning the TDOV panel, attention was given to framing conversations in ways that do not centre white, settler experiences — a principle the Working Group should continue to carry into all future programming.
- **Institutional Advocacy:** The meeting with President Rigg provided an important opportunity to highlight the Working Group's priorities to senior administration. Continued engagement with university leadership remains essential, particularly in the absence of dedicated institutional funding or staffing for 2SLGBTQIA+ student

What Progress Has Been Made

The following progress was made on recommendations and action items from the 2024–25 year and earlier:

- **QCommons:** Significant progress. The website was launched, actively promoted, and supported by a social media strategy. QCommons t-shirts were given/sold to raise awareness. Ongoing support is necessary to expand content and reach.
- **Events:** The goal of hosting two events (one fall, one winter) was achieved, responding to the 2024–25 recommendation to distribute programming across the academic year.
- **Cross-Working Group Collaboration:** Strong intersectional collaboration was achieved with the two events.
- **Meeting with University Leadership:** Meeting with President Rigg was an attempt to raising awareness of the Working Group's advocacy with senior university leadership.
- **Physical Space / Institutional Staffing:** No progress to date. The need for a full-time 2S&LGBTQ+ staff advocate and dedicated physical space remains unmet. These continue to be the Working Group's most critical unresolved recommendations

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Challenges

- **Political and Social Climate:** The broader political environment, marked by rising anti-trans legislation, rollbacks of equity protections, and increased hostility toward 2SLGBTQIA+ communities across North America, continued to significantly impact students at Brock. Many students are navigating fear, burnout, and isolation, and this context shapes all of the Working Group's work.
- **Absence of Institutional Supports:** Despite ongoing advocacy, Brock continues to lack a dedicated full-time 2S&LGBTQ+ advocate, a physical space for the community, and adequate access to queer-affirming mental health services on campus. The BUSU Board's 2024 decision not to proceed with a student referendum means students continue to bear the cost of this institutional gap.
- **Student Capacity and Burnout:** Student members and research assistants who are themselves 2SLGBTQIA+ and/or racialized face compounded demands in navigating advocacy work alongside their academic and personal lives. The Working Group remains committed to more intentional care for those who contribute their labour to this work.
- **Sustaining Engagement:** Growing and maintaining Working Group membership, particularly among students, remains an ongoing challenge. Strategies to improve outreach and onboarding continue to be explored.
- **QCommons Maintenance:** Keeping the QCommons platform current, well-resourced, and actively used requires sustained coordination beyond the capacity of volunteer working group members. Exploring additional supports or partnerships is essential.

Goals for 2025-2026

- Establish new co-chairs for the 2S&LGBTQI+ Working Group
- Continue to maintain and expand QCommons, including regular content updates, promotion, and community engagement through social media.
- Host two community events (one fall, one winter), with intentional attention to timing, framing, and intersectional programming.
- Continue advocacy for a full-time 2S&LGBTQ+ gender and sexual diversity advocate in a staff capacity at Brock University.
- Continue advocacy for increased access to queer-affirming mental health services for students on campus.
- Expand partnerships with on-campus and community organizations, including Niagara-region 2SLGBTQIA+ groups and allies.
- Facilitate coalition-building between 2SLGBTQIA+ students and Brock staff/faculty to explore intersectional programming and collaborative support.
- Increase Working Group membership and improve student engagement through active outreach and welcoming onboarding processes.

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- Pursue, in collaboration with HREO, the establishment of a Brock Pride Award to recognize students and staff who have made significant contributions to Brock's 2S&LGBTQIA+ community.

Recommendations for the President

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
    - The Working Group renews its recommendation that Brock University hire a full-time 2S&LGBTQ+ gender and sexual diversity advocate in a staff capacity. This position is urgently needed to coordinate resources, programming, peer support, and institutional advocacy for 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff, and faculty.
2. A physical space for 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff and faculty
    - A dedicated physical space signals institutional commitment to 2SLGBTQIA+ community members and addresses a long-standing gap at Brock, providing a venue for connection, programming, and support that virtual resources alone cannot replicate.
    - Sustained institutional backing - including continued support for QCommons digital infrastructure - is essential to ensure visibility, safety, and belonging for queer and trans students, staff, and faculty.
    - This recommendation has been raised directly with President Rigg in both December 2025 and April 2026, underscoring its priority and the Working Group's ongoing advocacy.
3. Institutional Support for QCommons
    - The Working Group recommends that Brock University provide ongoing institutional support for QCommons — including web hosting, content coordination, and promotion — to ensure the platform is sustainable beyond the volunteer capacity of Working Group members.
4. Increase Access to Queer-Affirming Mental Health Services
    - The Working Group recommends that Brock increase the availability of queer-affirming mental health services, including therapists with expertise in working with 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly trans and non-binary students, available on campus through Student Wellness and Accessibility Services.
5. Facilitate Coalition Building and Intersectional Programming
    - The Working Group recommends that the university facilitate structured opportunities for 2SLGBTQIA+ students to connect with staff and faculty across departments, fostering intersectional programming, collaborative advocacy, and peer support networks.

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6. Establish a Brock Pride Award (HREO-Led)
    - The Working Group recommends that the Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO), in consultation with the 2S&LGBTQIA+ Working Group and Brock Pride Club, establish a Brock Pride Award to recognize and support students and staff who have made significant contributions to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community at Brock University. Housing this award within HREO would provide appropriate institutional backing, resources, and continuity.

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Anti-Ableism and Mental Health (AAMH)

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

Committee Members

Demi Perrotta, Ben Johnson, Megan Kuzak, Athena Colman, Stacey Duncan, Adele Orr, Jennifer Thiessen (Library), Andrew Bassingthwaighte, Ann Gagne, Anne Readhead, Tricia Vause, , Marion Barbas (Registrar's office), Nadia Ganesh, Shadae Brown, Kennedy Hance, Behnaz Mirzai, Lisa Peso, Alison Rothwell, Martina Ciglenecki, Aishah Sonekan, Iyad Alsahli, Daniel Oguejiofor, Alexandra MacDonald, Oya Pakkal, Rabia Choudhary, Isra Alsahli, Toni Frearson (Registrar's Office).

I would like to thank all members of the working group whose energy and insight continue to inform our analysis and organizing. I also want to acknowledge the significant contribution of Megan Kuzak to our working group's focus and effectiveness, and Alison Rothwell's willingness to consult on significant issues of human rights and competing rights.

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 3, 2025

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- November 7, 2025
- December 5, 2025
- February 6, 2026
- March 6, 2026
- May 1, 2026

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 Person's 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:

- There would be more publicly visible discussions and activities that normalized the presence of disabled people engaging in their everyday lives
- There would be more active engagement of and with students, faculty and staff from across disciplines, identities, and cultures
- There would be more tenured faculty members working on projects that involved tackling unpleasant or uncomfortable issues
- There would be more seamless communication between and across groups committed to inclusion and anti-ableism
- We would engage in collaboration with other groups committed to meaningful inclusion
- There would be authentic engagement and consultation with the Academic Accommodations Policy changes process
- There would be opportunities for collaboration between this committee and members of the Niagara community who identify as disabled community members and/or their allies and/or caregivers.

Action Items

1. We fulfilled all our responsibilities, and the IDPD and AAED events were well attended. We also hosted two 'pop ups' per term to highlight the visibility of disabled people on campus. The Allyship workshop had minimal attendance, but it was a great opportunity to practice as a pilot. The workshop was designed in collaboration with the City of St. Catharines AODA advisor.
2. 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, although we tend to be lacking in faculty involvement, with students

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and staff being our most frequent attendees. Our collaborations with other groups and units on campus remains strong

4. Our challenges remain in the areas of faculty involvement, although our consultation with the BUFA Equity Committee was promising and meaningful in its willingness to address the complex issues relating to competing rights.

Community Outreach/Events

- Global Accessibility Awareness Day workshop May 15, 2025
- National Accessibility Awareness Week, 'Try a ParaSport' May 26-30, 2025.
- Consultation meetings on the Academic Accommodations Policy changes (October and November)
- Nomination, adjudication (November) and presentation of IARAs (December 3, 2025)
- IDPD December 3, 2025 (two student recipients, Jazlyn Savoie, Michael Selbie; one staff recipient, Carly Dugo)
- Ability and Empowerment Day February 19, 2026
- Allyship Workshop pilot event March 20, 2026
- Global Accessibility Awareness Day workshops (Allyship workshop; Community Seminar Series) May14- 15, 2026
- National Accessibility Awareness Week, Arts Based activities (collaboration with Mirror Theatre; collaboration with the Centre for Adaptive Physical Activity Rock On Adaptive Dancercise; Community Seminar Series) May 25-29, 2026.
    - Note, the May 2026 events are in the future tense; we will have more information on these in next year's report.

Lessons Learned

- 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 recommended Post Secondary Standards (https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-2021-initial-recommendations-report); the work on the revised academic accommodation policy was meaningful because the consultation was authentic; even if all the students' suggestions did not make it into the final policy, the students appreciated being part of the consultation.
- We do not have a workload standard that is adequately described or captured in our employment standards.

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- 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.
- Civility is free.
- We lost one of our student participants, Mark Kurtik, who died in February right before Ability and Empowerment Day, in February 2026. This was a reminder, as if we needed one, of how important it is to be timely in our change processes. Many disabled people live lives of intense precarity and the longer it takes for us to enact change, the more likely it is that it will be too late for the people who need it.
- One big lesson, again, a reminder of insights that we already know, from our Allyship workshop was the necessity to do more than 'educate' or 'promote awareness'. Change happens when behaviour changes, and bahavioural change usually happens when policy and consequences guide it, not only awareness and good intentions.

What progress has been made?

We made progress on all our recommendations except faculty involvement, effective and accessible institutional communication practices, and the formation of a University level committee that addresses the recommendations of the recommended Post Secondary Standards.

What were the challenges?

- Faculty involvement in supporting anti-ableism and inclusion; there are competing rights and responsibilities issues 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.
- Ignorance of or unwillingness to follow the policies and procedures we already have in place to support anti-ableism and authentic inclusion.
- Lack of consistency regarding ASL interpreters and public events
- Consequences of decisions about Parking costs and number/location of accessible parking spots. (While parking is more of an accessible built environment concern, it has a significant ripple effect into ableism. Raising the fee is against the post-secondary standards (we were in compliance but are no longer since that was changed) and the reduction of accessible parking spots in lot H resulted in at least one individual leaving Brock because they no longer have the access they need that is appropriate to their required accommodation.

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- Recommendation 165: Parking Fees
  Postsecondary institutions shall create a parking fee schedule that does not charge persons with ministry-issued disabled parking permits premium rates for premium parking locations if students are required to park in these locations due to a disability (for example, underground parking especially in the winter, disabled parking located adjacent to the building).
- **Note:** Recent conversations have led to a reduction in parking fees which we celebreate. However, this is something that needs to be monitored to ensure compliance).

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.
- Participate, with other working groups and the VP EDI, in a 10 year review of PACHRED and its working groups' implementation of the I recommendations from the Human Rights Task Force whose original recommendations included the formation of PACHRED.
- Get more tenured faculty involved in inclusion work on campus.
- Actively work toward the formation of an umbrella 'accessibility committee' (as per the recommended Post Secondary Standards recommendations) which meets regularly and includes the chairs and vice chairs of the groups on campus engaging in accessibility and inclusion work.

Recommendations to the President

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.
   - ***We do not have a workload standard that is adequately described or captured in our employment standards.*** (From the recommended standards for reference purposes https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-2021-initial-recommendations-report: Recommendation 98: Disability accommodation caseload – expectations
   - Student Accessibility Services staff shall carry a reasonable client load to ensure students will receive appropriate support and timely accommodation. To that end, we recommend that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities undertake a system-wide caseload study, considering the new and changing demands in the provision of education services (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018, p. 110), (for example, an increase in the number of students with mental health disabilities requested services) to address trends in required supports).

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3. Read and adhere to the recommended Post Secondary Standards, especially the formation of the university umbrella 'accessibility committee'.
    - Encourage the formation of an umbrella 'accessibility committee' (as per the recommended Post Secondary Standards recommendations) which meets regularly and includes the chairs and vice chairs of the groups on campus engaging in accessibility and inclusion work. (Note Recommendation 14 of the recommended PSE standards: Establish an accessibility advisory committee
    - Each institution shall establish, or entrust, a new or existing accessibility advisory committee to address and advise on accessibility barriers in the educational environment).
4. Engage seriously in discussions about institutional communication practices
    - Which should include document and digital accessibility, and a discussion of ASL interpreters at public facing events; 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?
    - *(*Previous recommendations (both from AAMH and what was sent to the Ministry) to hire an expert in this area continue to be ignored.
    - Fixing documents for departments like OPC or Secretariat, for example, should NOT be undertaken as an additional task. It is a specialty area of expertise. When individuals already assigned accessibility or rights-based job responsibilities are expected to do additional specialty work, it is an example of expecting disabled people and/or disability services experts to do the work of accessibility that is meant to be the responsibility of the department itself.
    - Note Recommendation 28: Information technology staff. In addition to recommendation 22, all post-secondary education IT staff shall undergo mandatory IT training related to:
        - creating and assessing accessible media and responsibilities under the information and communication standards, including social media
        - digital/accessible learning technologies
        - using inclusive language
        - including the value of usability testing, with the recommendation of paying users to provide feedback
    - Recommendation 76: Accessible digital technology lead (non-regulatory) Postsecondary institutions should appoint at least one high-level, institutional employee as the "accessible digital technology lead," to support staff and faculty/educators in the procurement/acquisition/training of digital technologies for learning, content creation and student support.
        - If a separate "accessible digital technology lead" is not possible, then the accessibility lead for the institution must take on this role, which may involve additional training
    - The accessible digital technology lead should have:

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- qualifications in accessible technology core requirements
- demonstrated knowledge and practical experience using assistive technology
- strong understanding of accessibility and usability testing when auditing digital technologies with assistive technology
- strong knowledge of procurement legal requirements
- It should be the responsibility of the accessible digital technology lead to incorporate the province-wide Accessible Procurement Standards for Educational Resources (noted in recommendation 104) for all purchases and to ensure all accessibility features are enabled at the institutional level.

A note on policy reviews

The following recommended PSE standards are not consistent with our newly revised policies and **should have been** considered in policy change and development. If it is possible, we propose a recommendation that REQUIRES the university to consult with the SMEs in this space -- not just SAY they do -- and perhaps LISTEN to them instead of assuming their supervisors know everything that is happening. All future policy reviews and changes should be measured against the post- secondary standards to ensure we are working towards not only best practices but preparing for the legislated changes to come.

- Recommendation 109: Refusal of disability accommodation requests
  If a postsecondary institution decides not to provide a requested disability accommodation, service, or support for a student, or to meet a disability-related need that the student identified, the postsecondary institution shall provide oral and written reasons for that refusal in a timely fashion, normally within 3-5 business days of formally communicating the refusal to the student.
- Recommendation 110: Resolving disability accommodation refusal disputes
  Postsecondary institutions shall develop an effective and transparent mechanism to resolve disputes that arise in the accommodation process. The mechanism must be a respectful, non-adversarial internal dispute resolution review process for hearing, mediating and deciding on the concerns of students with disabilities. If a student disagrees with any aspect of the postsecondary institution's decision on a request for accommodation or believes that the postsecondary institution has not provided support or accommodations to which it had agreed, the student will be informed of the review and dispute resolution process. (more to this one as well)

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Anti-Racism Committee (ARC)

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

Committee Members

Shaka Licorish; Aliya Aragon; Abdul Rahimi; Anteneh Ayanso; Beza Anteneh; Edlira (Christina) Zahaj; Jean Ntakirutimana; Liz Hay; Richard Ndayizigamiye; Marilyne Carrey; Xiaoyang Xia; Jean-Jacques Rousseau; Tassia Gabbidon; Taylor Court; Koreen McCullough; Ayesha Masood; Bailey O'Hagan; Charlotte Henay; David Yesaya; Dawn Kakiroko; Derek Foster; Rabia Choudhary; Shadae Brown; Tiffany Muhindi; Zack DeBruyne; Gita Madan

Introduction

The Anti-racism committee works to promote anti-racism, embrace diversity, and advance equity on campus through teaching, research, administration and community involvement. For us, Anti-racism means working to stop racism through developing means for fair treatment and equal opportunities. We recognize that racism exists in an ongoing fashion as a result of colonial-capitalist practices and policies, and that actions taken by individuals are key to curtailing racism on campus. We foster collaboration across departments and organizations, raise awareness, and advise leadership on systemic cultural change.

Meetings

All meetings were held online to increase access:

- October 29, 2025
- November 19, 2025
- December 10, 2025
- January 29, 2026
- February 26, 2026
- March 26, 2026
- April 23, 2026

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

This year the Anti-racism Committee focused on Audre Lorde's quote, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives," through learning about one another's experiences on campus, particularly as they pertain to the lived experience of racism as filtered through other identity categories such as international student, woman, or disability.

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We aimed to strengthen accountability for anti-racism initiatives across faculties and administrative units, support Black Student Success Centre programming, Confirm terms of reference for committee continuity, and fund student-led anti-racism events and initiatives

Community Events and Outreach

Documenting & Archiving Black Life, Work, & Scholarship: A Dialogue on Ethics & Practice

- A panel discussion and dinner on Thursday, February 26 2026 *Documenting & Archiving Black Life, Work, & Scholarship: A Dialogue on Ethics & Practice* was organized by the Anti-Racism Committee. The panel featured *Dr. Janelle Joseph,* Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Racial Justice, Health & Sport & Associate Professor, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, *Melissa J. Nelson,* Archivist, Educator, & Community Connector and *Dr. Beatrice Ombuki-Berman, PhD, ME, BSc.* Professor & Chair, Department of Computer Science.
- The Panel examined the question: How do we protect Black intellectual and creative labour? The thoughtful discussion moderated by graduate student and course instructor Kay Waboso examined the vital work of supporting Black scholars and artists both inside and outside the academy. Together, we navigated the future of the archive, diving deep into the tension where institutional procedures end and community practice begins. Master's student Talia Jermyn opened the evening, grounding us for a session of engaging, intentional, and thoughtful dialogue.
- The panel was an opportunity for students, staff and faculty to join together, learn from one another, and share in Black-focused anti-racism work. This session achieved Anti-racism Committee goals of building community across faculties and administrative units and strengthening accountability by directly involving students in planning, hosting, and presenting. https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/322185

Sidelined: The Color of the Game

- 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 on March 11, 2026. The Panel included *Dr. Janelle Joseph,* Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Racial Justice, Health & Sport & Associate Professor, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, *Daria Jorquera Palmer*, Strategic Initiatives & Partnership Manager, Anti-Racism in Sport (ARIS) & Co-Director of *SIDELINED; Marian Agyei-Gyamera,* Business Operations Manager, Toronto Marlies and *Nicole Chin*, Senior Manager, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, MLSE
- The discussion, moderated by Brock's Anti-racism and Inclusion Advisor, Shaka Licorish, challenged viewers to reconsider who has access, opportunity, & influence within Canadian sport systems. More than a screening, this event was an opportunity for critical dialogue across our campus & community. Attended by over 60 people, 30 of whom were Brock men's basketball and volleyball players, the film and moderated panel engaged the documentary's themes through the lenses of research, policy, governance, & professional practice. Together, explored how institutions — including universities — can move from awareness to accountability in advancing equity in sport.

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- This session was organized through direct partnership between the Anti-racism Committee and the Human Rights and Equity Office https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/323423

Play Proud: Celebrating Gender Diversity in Sport

- On March 27, 2026, The Anti-Racism committee collaborated with the 2SLGBTQIA+ Working Group for a winter event in collaboration with 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.
- The panel was hosted by a Brock graduate student and featured a screening of the Pink Light trailer, a panel discussion and an audience Q&A, a light dinner and a book signing. https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/323396

What progress has been made?

- We have continued to raise awareness about anti-racism in society and on campus.
- The goal of hosting two events was achieved, one in and one out of Black History Month. Intersectional collaboration was achieved across faculties and departments and across Working
- Groups. Group members were able to open up about their direct and indirect experiences as the Anti-Racism Committee is intentionally building relationality.

What were the challenges?

- Monthly meetings make actionable change difficult. To engage the entire committee, sub-committees (not only the co-chairs) will need to form to complete tasks.
- This year the Anti-racism Committee met in the context of wars and political unrest in Gaza, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, and Russia to name a few.
- The challenges presented by this environment mean that many racialized faculty, students and staff are exhausted and overwhelmed.

Lessons Learned

Several important insights from this year's Anti-racism Committee include

- Students have intersectional needs (e.g., aspiring to work in research fields) that are not being met due to racism compounded by other factors
- Racialized graduate students are particularly vulnerable due to precarity, leadership as TAs, and faculty who do not look like them
- Athletes are not always able to articulate their needs. Sadly, in some cases, racism is expected in their sport.
- Event planning should include advanced consent to video or audio record and coordination with off-campus, culturally-specific catering; planning an event during the day as opposed

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to evening may increase engagement. Ideally pairing an event with an existing class would increase engagement and attendance

- Coordination with other working groups requires additional meetings and patience to bring issues of race to the forefront.
- Meetings must be held at lunch to increase access, especially for staff.

Goals for 2025/26

In the coming year the committee will work:

- Increasing its membership and sustaining engagement,
- Raising awareness about racism on campus,
- Workshopping what bystanders can do to recognize and intervene when microaggressions happen,
- Meeting with university leadership to discuss the issues facing racialized staff in light of restructuring, the equity census, and the Scarborough Charter commitments.
- The Anti-Racism Committee will establish a new Staff Co-Chair and continue to increase collaboration with other Working Groups.

Recommendations to the President

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.

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Decolonization Working Group

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

Committee Members

Allison Flynn-Bowman, Amy Wilson, Chelsea Takalo, Diana deMan, Emily Fortin, Jenn Skelding, Koreen McCullough, Lily Smith, Maryam Nazari, Oya Pakkal, Sheila Cote-Meek, Valerie Michaelson

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 23, 2025 (Virtual)
- November 13, 2025 (Virtual)
- November 28, 2025 (Virtual)
- December 12, 2025 (Virtual)
- January 22, 2026 (In person)
- February 4, 2026 (Virtual)
- February 26, 2026 (Virtual)
- March 4, 2026 (Virtual)
- March 19, 2026 (Virtual)
- April 28, 2026 (In person)

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

- Increased on-campus visibility with cultural art and Indigenous works that focus on highlighting cultural pride
- Spotlighting and uplifting the works of Indigenous students across the main campus
- Address residential school denialism and the affects it has on the larger Brock University community and Indigenous community

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- Creating ongoing opportunities for dialogue to challenge residential school denialism

Action Items

1. Create space for Indigenous students to show and share their creative work
2. Provide space within the working group for individuals to self-determine meaningful strategies to work towards decolonization as a collective
3. Organize events
4. Continue to support Brock in areas of decolonization

Community Outreach/Events

Artful Resilience: Moving Beyond Denialism Thursday, March 26, 2026, in the Goodman Atrium on Brock's main campus from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

- As part of our group's ongoing work and commitment to uphold Indigenous Peoples' historical and present-day truth, and in response to residential school denialism, the working group organized an event for the community to come together to share teachings and various forms of art to honour allyship and good relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.
- Students, staff, faculty and community shared their creative work at this community art gathering to further support Indigenous survivance, resistance, and cultural continuance. The event included drummers and singers, local Indigenous catering, and artistic expression in various forms as ways of remembering, seeing, and imagining together.

Residential Schools: Committing To Change Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025 at Alphie's Trough on Brock's main campus from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

- This workshop examined residential schools with a primary focus on denialism and its impacts personally, at the university, and in greater societal relations. There were conversations started and engagement was created bring awareness and acknowledgement to understand impacts more comprehensively and evoke commitments and actions that can be taken in support of 'truth telling' concerning residential schools.

Trans Day of Visibility panel held on Friday, March 27, 2026.

- The Decolonization Working Group supported 2SLGBTQ+ Working Group's event. Members participated in the planning.

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Lessons Learned

We learned/relearned that we must keep pressing with this work for our seven generations coming. We learned that there is still a lot to be done given efforts to dismiss and/or falsify our histories that are ever present in educative spaces. Conversely, we have also learned that students are eager to learn and witness stories of Indigenous Peoples truth telling. In accordance, we learned that Indigenous Peoples keep garnering further support from other colleagues working to confront overt discriminatory practices and racism.

What progress has been made?

- Through a variety of outreach strategies, there was a significant increase in the number of participants engaged
- Intersectionality amongst working groups is being acknowledged and honoured as we continue to support each other's efforts
- Consultation with Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to provide strategic directions on the EDID Action Plan. Discussion surrounding decolonization at Brock University and equipping the community to demonstrate broader commitments.

What were the challenges?

The main challenge was navigating the emotional strain of dealing with the impacts of residential denialism. However, amongst the group itself, challenges were minimal. Everyone focused on what they could contribute and offer in terms of pulling the events together.

Goals for 2025-2026

- Sourcing more donors/funding for more decolonization events and workshops to be created, hosted and extended to the Brock community
- Invite Indigenous and other marginalized communities to events
- Add to website (resources)
- Keep Indigenous hires in conversations
- Making Indigenous Days of Significance more prominent:
    - November 4 – 8th – Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario
    - November 7th – Inuit Day
    - November 8th – Commemorating Indigenous Veterans Day
    - November 16th – Louis Riel Day (Canada acknowledges two days - the other being the 3rd Monday in February - Manitoba).
    - March 31st – Indigenous Languages Day

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Recommendations for the President

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

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Employment Equity Working Group

Chair: Mary Montgomery (Staff)

Note: Emily Hammond (staff) will be joining as Co-Chair for the 2026-2027 year.

Committee Members

Liz Clarke, Emily Hammond, Gavin Fearon, Wanda Gilmore, Naghma Khan, Madeline Pontone, Chelsea Takalo, Nwakerendu Waboso

Introduction

The Employment Equity Working Group (EEWG) advises 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, and workload.

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 wide range of expertise, and the issues discussed at EEWG meetings are relevant to 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

This year, the working group focused on several interconnected recommendations that reflect the spirit of Audre Lorde's assertion that "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." These include:

- **Strengthening Employment Equity Policies and Practices**
    - The group critically examined systemic barriers in hiring, including reliance on traditional metrics, gaps in inclusive hiring training, and limitations of self-identification processes.
- **Addressing the Broader Political Economy of Higher Education**
    - The speaker event on neoliberalism and underfunding connected equity issues to larger structural forces shaping the university.

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- **Improving Inclusion of Non-Unionized (AP&E) Staff**
    - Recognizing that equity extends beyond unionized groups, the working group identified gaps in communication, representation, and support for AP&E staff.

Action Items

1. Reviewed and provided feedback on the Equity Census prior to launch.
2. Engaged in detailed discussion and critique of the Employment Equity Policy, identifying gaps and inequities.
3. Organized and funded a speaker event focused on neoliberalism and higher education
4. Conducted an event debrief to improve future planning and accessibility.
5. Advocated to retain the PACHRED name to preserve accountability.
6. Initiated strategies to support AP&E staff, including:
    - Proposing a newsletter
    - Exploring a central communication hub

Community Outreach/Events

Stronger Together: Solidarity for Brock's Future: keeping universities public and fighting austerity.

- Keynote by Jenny J.H. Ahn, OCUFA Executive Director
  Presented by BUFA, PACHRED's Employment Equity Working Group, CUPE 4207, OCUFA, OSSTF, and SJRI.
  February 24, 2026: https://experiencebu.brocku.ca/event/321495

Lessons Learned

- Equity work requires structural change, not just policy updates. Existing systems (e.g., hiring metrics, union structures) can undermine equity goals.
- Accountability must be explicit and protected. Removing formal ties to leadership risks weakening impact.
- Engagement strategies must be tailored. Non-unionized staff require different approaches due to job security concerns and lack of formal representation.
- Events benefit from clear structure and accessibility planning, including time management and format considerations.
- Safe spaces for dialogue are critical, especially when discussing sensitive institutional issues.

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What progress has been made?

- Increased critical engagement with institutional policies, particularly employment equity and harassment/discrimination policies.
- Successful execution of a well-attended and impactful speaker event, raising awareness of systemic issues.
- Development of practical strategies to support AP&E staff (newsletter, communication networks).
- Strengthened inter-union collaboration and dialogue.
- Clear consensus on maintaining PACHRED's structure and influence.

What were the challenges?

- Limited transparency and representation in institutional committees.
- Tensions between equity goals and existing union/OPC structures, particularly around hiring and seniority.
- Job security concerns, especially for non-unionized staff, limiting engagement.
- Administrative influence and power dynamics, affecting open discussion and trust.
- Logistical challenges in event planning (e.g., time management, format).
- Broader concerns about neoliberal restructuring, including outsourcing and funding pressures.

Goals for 2025-2026

- Develop and implement a communication strategy for AP&E staff, including a newsletter and/or centralized platform.
- Continue advocacy for meaningful employment equity policy reform.
- Contribute to and monitor the Institutional Equity Action Plan implementation.
- Strengthen inter-union collaboration through joint events and initiatives.
- Host future educational events with improved accessibility and structure.
- Explore global and transnational dimensions of equity, including impacts of imperialism and colonialism.
- Maintain and reinforce accountability of university leadership.

Recommendations

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.

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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.

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International Student Working Group

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

Research Assistants: Anmol Rughani, Xiaoyang Xia

Committee Members

Dawn Kakiroko, Pawandeep Kaur, Damla Aksular, Tenzing Kunga, Vince Flores, Liao Zixuan, Marla Terreberry-Portfilio, Domenica Yuquilema Sanabria, Rumman Rafiq, Vriti Bajaj, Irene Charley, Xinyi Ma, Alan Liu, Rishi Yogesh Mandalia, Huma Khalid, Thuy Linh Dang, Taylor Nelson, Kurt Wang, Florentine Majid, Shae Stokes, Aadiya Gupta,

Introduction

The International Student Working Group (ISWG) was established in the Fall of 2025 to address the systemic barriers and inequities facing international students at Brock. We aim to improve support structures, policy development, and student wellbeing. We recognize that international students' experiences are shaped by multiple factors including race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic background, immigration status, and language. International students often navigate their education while contending with legal precarity, exploitative labour conditions, as well as cultural and racial isolation.

Our mandate is 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.
- Address systemic racism, xenophobia, and the structural marginalization of international students across policy, service delivery, and campus culture.
- Strengthen equity-informed, trauma-responsive, and culturally accessible supports for international students navigating challenges related to immigration, work exploitation, legal precarity, and social isolation.
- Center intersectional and decolonial frameworks in understanding the specific and compounding challenges faced by international students, including racialized, queer/trans, and low-income migrants.
- 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.

Meetings

- September 29, 2025:

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  - Introduction and planning for the year
- October 23, 2025:
  - Presentation from Brock International Services regarding the supports and services provided to internationals students and the Brock and national
  - Results from the Canadian Bureau of International Education International Student Survey 2023.
- November 14, 2025:
  - Planning for Focus Group to be conducted in December 2025
- April 13, 2026:
  - Discussion of the International Student Experience Project to be conducted in March-August 2026

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

The goal for this year was to understand the issues and barriers facing international students at Brock and to identify potential improvements.

Action Items

- We arranged for a presentation from Brock International Services to learn about current services and supports offered to Brock international students.
- We reviewed results from the Canadian Bureau for International Education, the CBIE 2023 International Student Survey. This survey includes results from Canadian midsize universities for a benchmark, with 3,726 students. We compared these results to Brock, with the sample size of 322 students.
- We planned to conduct focus group interviews. The interview questions/process and logistics were completed. However, this was postponed due to lack of participation at the recruiting stage.
- We contracted Nick Xia to lead the International Student Experience Project in the Spring-Summer of 2026.

Community Outreach/Events

January 20, 2025 – PACHRED Panel Discussion on International Students

A panel discussion was held at a PACHRED meeting on January 20th. The panel featured four of Brock past and current international students.

- Justin Mafie, a Brock undergraduate student talked about how to foster inclusive learning for international students. How faculty, staff, and the university can move beyond surface-level inclusion to create a sense of belonging for international students inside and outside of the classroom.

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- Nick Xia was an international student at Brock from 2011 to 2025. He received a PhD in Psychology, and his research examines health, economic, and educational disparities. At the panel, Nick made an excellent presentation about the international graduate student experience. It highlighted the structural barriers and the conditions needed to support their full potential.
- Anmol Rughani is an international student at Brock. Currently a master's student in Public Health, Anmol also completed the undergraduate degree in Public Health at Brock and has worked in many roles across the university. Anmol talked about how race, sexuality, and immigration status intersect within institutional systems.
- Linh Thuy Dang. She has a Master of Arts in Applied Disability Studies from Brock. Linh is a disabled woman from Vietnam and she talked about the experience of disabled international students in Canada, in particular the intersection of ableism, racism, and colonialism.

Lessons Learned

- The Committee has taken the time to learn about the existing services and supports available to international students at Brock and the data that exists about the international student journey. This information allowed the committee to identify the need for additional information.
- Feedback received from the panel discussion helped inform the committee regarding the experiences of international students at Brock. There are many potential issues to focus on, and it is important to identify the areas to best direct our effort to in the future.

What progress has been made?

- After the panel discussion, we decided that a more rigorous approach than conducting focus groups was required to gather sufficient information to understand the international student experience at Brock.
- Therefore, our 2025-26 budget was allocated to contract a researcher to conduct more structured interviews to identify barriers, opportunities for improvements and strengths
- This project timeline is March - August 2026.

Goals for 2025-2026

In 2026-2027 we plan to analyze the results from the structured interviews and start to prioritize the issues that the committee can act on.

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Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVP)

Chair: Julie Fennel (staff)
HRE Resource Person: Katie Keays

Members

Athena Colman, Aishah Sonekan, Alison Rothwell, Amanda Villella, Amanda Ziegler, Curtis Fogel, Catharine Pelletier, Donna Moody, Hijin Park, 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, Benny Daniels

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

1. October 30th, 2025
2. January 30th, 2026
3. March 6th, 2025

Recommendations that the Working Group addressed during the year

Guided by Audre Lorde's assertion that "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives," the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee's work this year emphasized the intersectional nature of gender-based and sexual violence and the importance of inclusive, community-informed prevention efforts.

A key focus of the Committee was the planning and facilitation of the December 6th Memorial Event, which intentionally centered critical discussion alongside remembrance. The event encouraged participants to reflect on questions such as: *Whose names and stories do we remember when we talk about gender-based violence? Whose are often missing from public memorials or media coverage, and why?* By creating space for dialogue around systemic inequities and representation, the event aligned closely with PACHRED's thematic focus on equity, inclusion, and the interconnected nature of social justice issues.

This year, the Committee also established dedicated working groups to advance key priorities. One working group began proactively reviewing Brock University's Sexual Violence Policy ahead of the scheduled 2027 review date, with the goal of identifying opportunities to strengthen

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the policy through an intersectional and trauma-informed lens. Another working group focused on community engagement and prevention education through initiatives such as the Consent Carnival, which explored consent across a range of lived realities, relationships, identities, and social contexts. Together, these initiatives reflected the Committee's ongoing commitment to recognizing that experiences of gender-based and sexual violence are shaped by intersecting systems of oppression and that meaningful prevention and response efforts must account for those complexities.

Action Items

In relation to the recommendations identified above, the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee focused its efforts this year on four key initiatives: the December 6th Memorial Event, the Sexual Violence Policy Working Group, the Consent Carnival, and the development of the Disclosure Dialogues initiative. Each of these action items aimed to strengthen Brock University's approach to sexual violence prevention, awareness, education, and response through intersectional and community-informed practices.

1. The December 6th Memorial Event created opportunities for education, reflection, and dialogue surrounding gender-based violence, with a particular emphasis on whose experiences are represented, remembered, and often excluded from public conversations and memorialization.
2. The Consent Carnival expanded prevention education efforts by engaging students in conversations about consent across a variety of relationships, identities, and lived realities, reinforcing the understanding that consent is contextual and shaped by broader social dynamics.
3. The Sexual Violence Policy Working Group also began proactive review work ahead of the policy's scheduled 2027 review date. Through this initiative, committee members began identifying areas for future consideration and discussion to support ongoing policy development through a trauma-informed and intersectional lens.
4. Additionally, significant foundational work was completed this year for the development of the Disclosure Dialogues initiative. This proposed program is intended to support faculty and staff in responding to student disclosures of gender-based and sexual violence through a conversational, accessible, and trauma-informed approach. Throughout the year, committee members developed a draft framework and explored implementation strategies for the initiative. While the program has not yet been formally launched, advancing Disclosure Dialogues will remain a key priority for the Committee in the upcoming year.

Community/Outreach Events

- December 6th Memorial Event: Honour and Action: Remembering École Polytechnique
  - **Date & Time:** Friday, December 5th from 12pm to 1:30pm
- Consent Carnival
  - **Date & Time:** Tuesday, March 24th from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

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Lessons Learned

This year's initiatives reinforced the importance of interactive, dialogue-based, and intersectional approaches to gender-based violence prevention work.

The Consent Carnival demonstrated that community members engage readily with consent education when programming is accessible, conversational, and grounded in real-life contexts. Similarly, the December 6th Memorial Event highlighted the value of creating intentional space for critical reflection and discussion alongside memorialization, particularly regarding whose experiences are centered or excluded in public conversations about gender-based violence.

The Committee also learned that proactive policy work allows for more thoughtful and collaborative review processes, while the development of the Disclosure Dialogues initiative emphasized the ongoing need for trauma-informed capacity-building among faculty and staff. Overall, this year's work reinforced that meaningful prevention and response efforts require sustained collaboration, intersectional analysis, and community engagement.

What progress has been made?

Progress continued this year on several recommendations and action items related to sexual violence prevention education, community engagement, and institutional capacity-building. One significant area of progress was the continued expansion of interactive and community-centered prevention programming through the Consent Carnival.

Feedback from participants demonstrated a strong positive impact, with 96.9% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the event helped them better understand consent and healthy relationships, and 97.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing that events like this contribute to creating a safer and more respectful campus community. Participant feedback further highlighted the value of accessible and open dialogue-based programming, with attendees identifying key takeaways such as "the importance of consent," "that Brock cares about us," and that "open conversations about uncomfortable topics create healthy communities." These responses demonstrate continued progress toward fostering a campus culture grounded in consent, safety, and community care.

Additional progress was made through the establishment of focused working groups dedicated to long-term prevention and response efforts. The Sexual Violence Policy Working Group began preliminary review and consultation work ahead of the formal 2027 policy review timeline, helping to create momentum for ongoing policy development and institutional reflection.

Progress was also made on the development of the Disclosure Dialogues initiative. While the program has not yet launched, substantial foundational work was completed this year, including the development of a draft framework and early planning discussions focused on supporting faculty and staff in responding to student disclosures in trauma-informed and conversational ways. Together, these initiatives reflect continued advancement of the Committee's goals related to education, prevention, institutional accountability, and community engagement.

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Challenges

One of the primary challenges faced by the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee this year was reduced engagement and attendance among committee members, which impacted the Committee's ability to maintain momentum and advance initiatives consistently throughout the year. As members balance committee participation alongside significant professional, academic, and operational responsibilities, sustaining long-term involvement and participation in working groups remained an ongoing challenge.

The Committee also encountered challenges related to moving initiatives from planning to implementation, particularly for projects such as Disclosure Dialogues, which required substantial consultation, drafting, and foundational development work prior to launch. Additionally, maintaining consistent campus engagement on topics related to gender-based and sexual violence requires ongoing outreach and relationship-building, particularly when addressing complex and emotionally difficult subject matter through an intersectional lens.

Goals for 2025/26

In the coming year, the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee plans to continue advancing initiatives related to prevention education, policy development, and institutional capacity-building. A key priority will be the launch of the Disclosure Dialogues initiative, which is intended to support faculty and staff in responding to disclosures of gender-based and sexual violence through a conversational and trauma-informed approach.

The Committee also plans to undertake a comprehensive review of the Sexual Violence Policy ahead of the formal 2027 review timeline, including the development of a community feedback form and consultation opportunities such as focus groups to gather input from students, staff, and faculty. Additional goals include expanding interactive consent and prevention programming, strengthening campus awareness of available supports and reporting options, improving committee engagement and participation, and continuing to ensure that the Committee's work remains grounded in intersectional and inclusive approaches to gender-based violence prevention and response.

Recommendations

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.

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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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