

# **Colonization, Racialization, and Indigenizing the Academy**

The Dalhousie Student Union is committed to promoting equity within our student body and across our campus. Creating inclusive and positive environments is a collective responsibility for all members and stakeholders of the Dalhousie community.

The Dalhousie Student Union Executive, Staff, and Council must be in compliance with our Equity Policy. We are responsible for ensuring that DSU services, events, advocacy, campaigns, and other programs of the Union represent the diversity of the Union's membership, including but not limited to, creating bylaws, policies, programmes, activities and groups that aim to ameliorate the conditions of marginalized communities including Indigenous students; racialized students; students with disabilities; 2SLGBTQ+ students; and women students.

Student union solidarity is based on the principle that all members should be able to participate equally in their union, recognizing that students have diverse experiences of privilege and marginalization. As members of the students' union, mutual respect, cooperation and understanding are our goals. We should neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity of any individual or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

It is our collective responsibility to create an inclusive space for discussion and dialogue. Any form or forms of discrimination and/or harassment will not be tolerated, nor will hate speech rooted in, but not limited to, sexist, racist, classist, ableist, homophobic or transphobic sentiments and/or remarks. We all have an obligation to ensure that an open and inclusive space, free of hate is established. (see Appendix A)

This year, the Dalhousie Student Union saw the first majority racialized executive. Students are actively prioritizing diversity and inclusion within their student leadership and it's important to see Dalhousie University take an active role in this area as well.

Dalhousie University has committed to strategic priority 5.2, Fostering a collegial culture grounded in diversity and inclusiveness. It is promising to see that our institutional leadership is committing itself to promoting equity across our campuses. As students, we are one of the biggest stakeholders in our institution. The Board of Governors Student Caucus recognizes that not providing adequate support for racialized and indigenous students puts the safety of students at risk. Dalhousie University has the potential to champion diversity and inclusion and position itself as a leader in this regard. The Dalhousie Student Union has the following recommendations to the Dalhousie Board of Governors to support it in its mission.

## **Recommendations:**

- 1.** Mandate a land recognition at all board and board committee meetings.
- 2.** Hire more Indigenous and racially visible faculty members
- 3.** Mandate anti-oppressive/cultural safety education for board members
- 4.** Change artwork on walls in University Hall to emphasize the role that racialized people play in leading communities
- 5.** Lobby the federal government to “provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education” TRC 11 (Appendix B)
- 6.** Lobby the “federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators to provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.” TRC 62ii
- 7.** Work with Senate to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages. TRC 16
- 8.** “Create two new positions, Co-ordinators of Aboriginal Student Access (COASA) and Black/African Canadian Student Access (COBACS).” ABACSAR 3 (Appendix C)
- 9.** “Establish designated seats for representatives from the Aboriginal and Black/African Canadian communities to sit on the Board of Governors” ABACSAR 7
- 10.** Formal acknowledgement by the University President, on behalf of the university community, recognizing that Dalhousie is located on unceded Mi’kmaq territory, and that the treaty rights of Aboriginal peoples to post-secondary education are not being fulfilled. ABACSAR 11
- 11.** “Grow targeted scholarship/bursary support to at least 16% of the total Student Assistance. Currently, targeted funding for Aboriginal and Black/African Canadian communities amounts to 10% of total student assistance.” ABACSAR 13

## **Glossary:**

When engaging in equity work, it is important to understand the power of language. The following is a list of terms that may be useful in our collective growth as a Board. It's important to remember that this list of terms is not stagnant and the terms themselves are constantly changing and shifting as analysis evolves and as we better understand different forms of oppression.

### **Allyship:**

Allyship occurs when a member of a privileged group works to dismantle any form of oppression from which they receive the benefit. Being an ally means acting in solidarity with marginalized groups. Allyship is not an identity but an ongoing process.

### **Aboriginal Peoples:**

Aboriginal Peoples is a collective name for all of the original peoples of Canada and their descendants. The Constitution Act of 1982 specifies that the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada consist of three groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Metis.

### **Anti-Black Racism:**

Anti-Black racism refers to the pervasive and systemic nature of racism that actively targets Black bodies and communities. It is the recognition that even within racialized communities, Black people are seen as the furthest from whiteness and are viewed as inferior. Anti-Black racism can take the form of underrepresentation of Black people on college and university campuses, high rates of police violence in Black communities, or the maintenance of stereotypes that regard Black people as dangerous, lazy or criminal.

### **Colonialism:**

Colonialism is the establishment, maintenance, acquisition, and expansion of colonies through violence in one territory by people from another territory. Colonialism is a set of unequal relationships between the dominant colonial state and between the Indigenous peoples of the colonized territory.

### **Equality vs. Equity:**

Equality is the ideology that everyone has access to the same opportunities.

Equity recognizes that not everyone has the same advantages and attempts to close those gaps. The idea of equity is that we cannot all be equal until we recognize the differences that privilege some and disadvantage others.

In more practical terms, equality would be giving everyone the same sized shoe whereas equity would be giving everyone a shoe that fits their particular size.

### **First Nation:**

Some communities have adopted First Nation to replace the term "band" in the 1980s. It is a matter of preference and writers should follow the choice expressed by individual First

Nations/bands. The term should not be used as a synonym for Aboriginal Peoples because it doesn't include Inuit or Metis people.

**Indigenous:**

Indigenous refers to the original peoples of any given land. In Canada, the Indigenous people of this land are Aboriginal people, that is to so say, First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples.

**Intersectionality:**

Scholar Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality and it means that all systems of oppression are connected. Intersectionality recognizes that an individual is never just one thing, but a collection of identities and experiences. In many, if not most cases, it also acknowledges that one person can hold both privileged identities as well as identities that are marginalized.

**Inuit:**

Inuit people are the Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada, who live above the treeline in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and in Norther Quebec and Labrador.

**Marginalization:**

Marginalization is a process of social de-valuation that serves to justify disproportional access to scarce social and material resources. It's a process that pushes a particular group or groups of people to the edge of society by not allowing them an active voice, identity or place in it. It does this through the exclusion or isolation of people from being able to participate in political, social, and economic mainstreams that others in society who hold power and privilege can participate in. Individuals and groups can be marginalized on the basis of multiple aspects of their identity, including but not limited to: race, gender or gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, sexuality, age, and/or religion. Some individuals identify with multiple marginalized groups, and may experience further marginalization as a result of their intersecting identities.

**Metis:**

Metis refers to Aboriginal people of specific mixes of First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Metis people, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit, or non-Aboriginal people. The Metis have a unique culture that draws on diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway, and Cree.

**Power:**

Power means having access to resources and influence on decision makers' power to get what you want accomplished. Though that influence and power gives people the ability to influence others, the ability to define reality for yourself and potentially for others. Power can be visible, hidden, or invisible. Power can show up as power over others, power with others and/or power within a group. Power is always acquired at the expense of another person or group. Someone or some group has power because someone else or some other group does not.

**Privilege:**

Privileges are systemic advantages based on certain characteristics that are celebrated by society and preserved through its institutions. These can include being white, having money, being straight, not having a disability, etc. Frequently, people are unaware that these characteristics should be understood as privileges as they are so effectively normalized. Privilege is not earned, but afforded automatically based on characteristics and traits of an individual.

**Racialized:**

Racialized refers to anyone who experiences racism because of their race, skin colour, ethnic background, accent, or culture. Racialized people are people of colour, Indigenous peoples, and ethnic and cultural minorities.

**Racism:**

Racism is a system of disadvantage based on race. It empowers people with the ability to act on the belief that people of different races have different qualities and abilities, and that some races are inherently superior or inferior. Racism manifests in many ways, from dislike and avoidance of people based on their race to discrimination against them on an institutional level to acts of race-based violence. Racism is related power: who has power and who is given power by society. Racism exists beyond one-on-one interactions.

**Whiteness, White Privilege, White Supremacy:**

Whiteness is a socially and politically constructed ideology based on beliefs, values, behaviours, habits and attitudes which result in the unequal distribution of power and privilege based on skin colour. Whiteness is a marker of social, political, economical status that is always changing based on historical context.

White Privilege refers to the systemic advantages afforded to white people with European ancestry around the world over those who are racialized and/or have ancestry that is not European. In a white supremacist system, white privilege and racial oppression are two sides of the same coin. White privilege is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of:

- Preferential prejudice for and treatment of white people based solely on their skin colour and/or ancestral origin from Europe.
- Exemption from racial and/or national oppression based on skin color and/or ancestral origin from Africa, Asia, Oceania the Americas and the Middle Eastern world.
- Institutions and culture (economic, legal, military, political, educational, entertainment, familial, and religious) which privilege peoples from Europe over peoples from Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Middle Eastern World.

White Supremacy is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continent, nations, and racialized peoples by white peoples and nations of the European continent for the purpose of maintaining and defending a Eurocentric system of wealth, power, and privilege.