



University of Toronto

Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ANTI-RACISM OFFICER

for the period July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005

September 2005

PREAMBLE

During the 2004-05 academic year, the Race Relations and Anti-Racism Initiatives Office was in a period of transition. This annual report addresses activities at the office during the term of the interim Officer, Professor Charmaine Williams. Dr. Williams served as the Race Relations and Anti-Racism Initiatives Officer from September 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005 with assistance from Nikki Redman, the assistant to the Office from December 3, 2004 to June 30, 2005. During that period, one of the major activities of the Office was conducting a consultation across the University to review its activities. One of the outcomes of that consultation was a recommendation to change the title of the office to the Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office (ARCDO). It was also recommended that the title of the officer be changed to "Anti-racism Officer". These changes were approved by the President and Vice-Provost of the University of Toronto.

This annual report will provide information on the review of the office, and activities in the office during the 2004-05 year.

RACE RELATIONS AND ANTI-RACISM INITIATIVES OFFICE REVIEW (September 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005)

Established as a permanent office in January 1993, the Race Relations & Anti-Racism Initiatives Office serves the three campuses of the University under a mandate that includes responsibility for dealing with discrimination & harassment on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship or creed.

Responsibilities of the Office include:

- ensuring that every member of the University community is afforded the right to work & study in an environment free of biases based on the characteristics outlined above & where the individual feels entitled to treatment which is dignified & respectful;
- providing assistance in the investigation & mediation of current conflicts & disputes which are rooted in one or more of those characteristics so as to reach a satisfactory resolution;
- helping to frame & promote anti-racism initiatives & to disseminate them throughout the University;

- Contributing to activities designed to provide members of the University community with the attitude, knowledge & skills to deal with persons from a variety of ethno-cultural & racial backgrounds in a sensitive & equitable manner.

During the 2004-5 academic year, the Office was in a process of consultation with staff, students and faculty across the three campuses to develop a series of recommendations that address how these responsibilities will continue to be addressed in future activities of the Office. Members of the community and experts at other universities were also consulted as part of this process.

Recommendations resulting from this process include the following:

1. Advocacy role

The Office should initiate and collaborate with all Divisions within the University in activities designed to facilitate the development of the University as an organization exemplifying a commitment to anti-racism and diversity.

2. Guidelines re Complaint Process

The University should develop guidelines for complaint management.

3. Professional Development

The Office should facilitate the development of professional development programs that are oriented to preventing discrimination and intercultural misunderstanding.

4. Involvement in Scholarly Activities

The Office should facilitate access to expertise on racial/ethnic/religious equity and its applications to scholarly activities.

5. Three Campus Focus

The Office should contribute to equity and diversity activities across the three campuses for staff, students and faculty.

6. Student Support

The RRARI Office should work with Student Affairs offices and other stakeholders on the three campuses to provide more systemic support and consultation to students and their representatives across the range of cultural self-definitions.

7. Advisory Council

The Office should establish an Advisory Council to meet during the year for information exchange and consultation.

OFFICE INITIATIVES & COLLABORATIONS

Launching of www.racerelations.utoronto.ca

In January 2005, the Office launched a website to increase its profile within and beyond the University of Toronto campuses. The new website provides information about ARCDO services, policies addressing equity issues at the university, and initiatives emerging out of the office, and other university units and community organizations addressing equity issues.

Launching of racerelations listserv

In January 2005, the Office also launched a listserv service. **Racerelations-L** is a broadcast list to keep students, faculty and staff at the University of Toronto informed of Initiatives, events, relating to making University of Toronto an inclusive, anti-racist environment. The list has been used to announce meetings, educational events, opportunities to get involved in anti-racism activities, etc.

First Annual Tri-Campus March 21 Celebration

March 21 marks the anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre (1960) in South Africa when police opened fire on hundreds of peaceful demonstrators against Apartheid's passbook laws. In 1966, the United Nations declared March 21 the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in memory of this tragedy. In 1989, Canada showed support for the UN declaration by becoming the first country in the world to promote a March 21 Campaign. As a result, March 21 has become a national focal point for raising awareness and involving Canadians in the movement against racism.

The ARCDO Office initiated efforts to coordinate and publicize activities on the three campuses that would commemorate this important day. There was enthusiastic response from many university programs and departments. U of T March 21 Celebration was covered by both university and local newspapers.

Activities in the 2005 celebration included:

-
- Beyond Perceptions: Towards Managing Diversity – Video and Discussion hosted by the Faculty of Social Work Anti-Racism, Multiculturalism and Native Issues Centre
 - Commemorative discussion on South Africa – Hosted by the African Students' Association
 - American History X – Movie screening hosted by the UTM Student Centre
-

- The Writing on the Wall Community Art Site – Art exhibit hosted by the UTSC International Student Centre
 - Active Voices: Sports and Diversity – Lecture and discussion hosted by the Faculty of Physical Education and Health
 - What can the University do to Eliminate Racism? – Brainstorming session hosted by the Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office
-

The Racism Free Zone Campaign

As part of the March 21 celebrations, the Office launched the University of Toronto Racism-Free Zone Campaign. This campaign was designed to increase awareness about what constituted racism and give them ideas about how to combat it by taking responsibility for maintaining racism-free zones. Specific suggestions were that a racism-free zone could be achieved by:

- **Showing respect** to people of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, ancestries and creeds;
- **Speaking up** when you witness or experience discrimination and/or harassment so that people know it is not acceptable behaviour in your space;
- **Getting involved** in activities that are designed to promote anti-racism, learning about different cultural experiences and cooperation among groups;
- **Taking responsibility** for creating spaces where issues associated with race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnicity, citizenship or creed can be discussed freely and respectfully.

The Racism-Free Zone campaign was launched with distribution of buttons and postcards to thousands of students, staff, faculty and community members.

In addition to initiatives that rely solely on the ARCDO team efforts, the Office also joins with other campus units to deliver programs and initiatives. The University of Toronto Welcome Kit is a joint initiative among equity offices that is designed to inform incoming students about equity offices and services available to them on the campus. This collaborative effort will be launched in Fall 2005.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

One of the goals of the University of Toronto Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office is to heighten campus awareness and understanding of the University statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment. In 2004-5, the office participated in 11 presentations, 4 workshops and 1 information displays. The audiences for these educational events included students, staff, faculty and members of the external community.

Education, Training and Information Activities took place in the following venues:

- University of Toronto Faculty of Social Work
- University of Toronto Staff Development
- University of Toronto at Scarborough Student Centre
- University Affairs Board
- University of Toronto Department of Philosophy
- University of Toronto Status of Women Advisory Council
- Hampton University, Norfolk Virginia
- University of Toronto Black Student Association High School Conference
- City of Toronto Community Safety Secretariat
- Health Equity and Diversity Conference, Toronto
- Racism and Work Place Conference, Toronto.

CONSULTATIONS & COMMITTEE WORK

Staff in the office also sat on committees and task forces to provide consultation and input on issues of racial/ethnic/cultural/religious equity. Committee involvement during the 2004-5 year included:

- Equity Issues Advisory Group
- Cultural Communities and Positive Space Working Group
- Transitional Year Program Admissions Committee
- University of Toronto Welcome Kit Committee
- Aboriginal Advanced Practitioner Program Faculty of Social Work
- Family Service Association of Toronto Board
- Family Service Association of Toronto Access and Equity Committee
- Canadian Woman Studies Journal Guest Editorial Board

COMPLAINTS: CASES AND CONSULTATIONS

The University of Toronto's Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment was instituted in 1994 for the following purpose:

The University aspires to achieve an environment free of prohibited discrimination and harassment and to ensure respect for the core values of freedom of speech, academic freedom and freedom of research. The purpose of this *Statement* is to promote a greater awareness of the rights and responsibilities entailed by these aspirations and to describe the manner in which the University deals with prohibited physical and verbal harassment (apart from harassment based on sex or on sexual orientation, which are dealt with in *Policy and Procedures: Sexual Harassment*).

The approach taken in the *Statement* is to reiterate the University's commitment to the rights of freedom from prohibited discrimination and harassment and to the rights of freedom of expression and inquiry, to recognize that the task of implementing and respecting those values within the unique environment of the University is a delicate one that precludes the use of blunt instruments, and to describe the responsibilities of various members of the University community and the institutional arrangements available to fulfill the commitment to a working and learning environment free from prohibited discrimination and harassment.

In accordance with those expectations, the Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office has the responsibility to provide the President and other members of the University community with advice and assistance in fostering the principles of equal opportunity and equity. The Office categorizes complaints under two categories: cases and consultations. Cases involve the Office in direct intervention in a situation. Consultations involve providing information and advice to complainants or administrators who wish to address the situation themselves. Consultations usually require only short-term involvement by the Office.

The tables below summarize the work that the office performed in response to complaints received between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005.

Table I *Cases based on complaints requiring intervention by the Office*

Constituency of complainant	Constituency named in complaint				TOTAL
	staff	faculty	student	Non-UT	
Staff	1	-	1	1	3
Faculty	-	3	-	1	4
Student	9	5	2	1	17
Non-UT	-	1	1	-	2
TOTAL	10	9	4	3	26

Of the 26 cases, 6 cases were inherited from the period before Charmaine Williams took office (coverage was provided by Paddy Stamp of the Sexual Harassment Office); these cases were closed due to inactivity. Eleven new cases were closed and 9 are ongoing.

Table II *Consultations on complaints*

Constituency of complainant	Constituency named in complaint				TOTAL
	staff	faculty	student	Non-UT	
Staff	-	-	1	1	2
Faculty	-	-	2	-	2
Student	1	7	-	1	9
Non-UT	-	-	1	-	1
TOTAL	1	7	4	2	14

Anonymous/Information only complaints:

The Office instituted a practice of accepting anonymous and information only complaints from people who wanted the office to be aware of situations but did not desire intervention or specific consultation. Many of the individuals seeking to make these type of reports perceived the labour or risks involved in launching a complaint as beyond their capacities. Instituting the practice of receiving anonymous and information only complaints provided options for people who wished to come forward but were uncertain about the endpoint they desired. Receiving such complaints is useful for tracking trends on the campus that may not reach official attention because of people's unwillingness to step forward. The recurrent categories of anonymous/information only complaints were based on perceptions of:

- Discriminatory hiring and promotion procedures for staff and faculty;
- Graduate students who are people of colour being counselled by faculty members to leave academia;
- Opportunities being distributed on the basis of placement in particular social networks, maintaining privileged status for insider groups;
- Lack of a code of conduct or disciplinary procedures to address discriminatory or offensive behaviour by faculty members
- Harassment by strangers on the street; most reports came from students that were Muslim men.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The 2004-5 year was busy and exciting in the Anti-Racism Office. There was steady activity in the area of complaint resolution and providing support to individuals dealing with racism and discrimination, but there was also the opportunity to participate in steady activity across the campuses focused on increasing inclusion and equity. The consultation on ARCDO activities reminded us that the campuses of this university are the site of progressive action and have the potential to be achieving even more. These campuses contain many people who want to be part of seeing the University of Toronto reach its full potential as an institution committed to principles of equity, excellence and diversity. It is our hope that the Anti-Racism Office will move forward with the renewed mandate it has received from the members of the university community – to increase awareness and skills for cultivating an inclusive and equitable campus, to intervene effectively in situations of discrimination and harassment, and to advocate relentlessly for the elimination of racism and discrimination from this university and the communities that surround it.

Charmaine C. Williams, PhD, RSW
Anti-Racism Officer

Nikki Redman,
Assistant to the Anti-Racism & Cultural
Diversity Office

