

**Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture  
McGill University**

**Working Paper on Anti-racism Consultations  
November 2020**

## **1. Background**

In June 2020 McGill University's Principal, Suzanne Fortier, issued a statement on injustice and racism in light of the shock, anger and dismay that followed the death of George Floyd. In her statement the Principal reminded members of the McGill community that "our strength lies in our unity and in living the principles that McGill embraces in its mission":

The mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge, by offering the best possible education, by carrying out research and scholarly activities judged to be excellent by the highest international standards, and by providing service to society.

She also noted that equity and inclusiveness are among McGill's principles, along with academic freedom, integrity and responsibility, and called on the University community to "confront and flatten social inequities." Provost Christopher Manfredi was then assigned the mandate to develop a plan for McGill to "advance our work in connection with anti-Black racism." The plan, which was completed in September 2020, includes actions, targets and timelines.

On 14 July 2020, a Town Hall meeting was called in the Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture (hereafter, the School) with M.Arch. students primarily to address COVID-19 matters.

Attendees raised the issue of systemic racism at the School and subsequently some students, notably the Graduate Architecture Student Association (GASA), expressed their disappointment with the responses from the School's leadership on this issue. Following this meeting, GASA and ASA presented a *Call for Action against Systemic Racism at the School of Architecture* on 30 July, which detailed 36 actions they believed the School should take to address systemic racism in all its forms.

In response to this intervention the School embarked on a series of externally-facilitated consultations with students, full-time faculty, sessional course lecturers, staff and alumni to

sound out views, gain different experiences and perspectives, and identify priorities for action to address systemic racism that affects the inclusion of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) students, faculty and staff.

The consultations took place over the period September 17 to October 23. (See Appendix A for consultation data.) To ensure that the efforts of the School are not isolated but in sync with those made by both the University and the Faculty of Engineering, the consultations sought input on individual experiences, perceptions of racism, diversity and inclusion within the School, and comments and suggestions about how the School does and could address the five key areas identified in the Provost's Anti-Black Racism Plan, namely:

1. Student experience
2. Research and knowledge
3. Outreach
4. Workforce
5. Space

This Working Paper presents a summary of the broad, frank and passionately articulated ideas, concerns and suggestions heard during the consultations. It is not intended to offer specific recommendations, but rather to inform the work of a future working group whose role will be to develop an anti-racism action plan for the School, including priorities and specific actions and timelines. A number of people who participated in the consultations see this as a pivotal moment for the School and expect that the process initiated by these consultations will have wide-ranging and transformative potential if followed through to an appropriate conclusion. This would include the incorporation of an anti-racism plan into an over-arching strategic plan for the School in which the School's vision, mission and identity can be considered, through inclusive dialogue and, potentially, reimagined.

## **2- The Climate within the School**

There appears to be widespread agreement within the School community, particularly in the last two years, that there is a lack of diversity, in several respects. Members of the School seem keen to tackle this issue and support a process to bring about meaningful change. This will involve acknowledging the impact of systemic racism and taking action to heighten awareness, to self-educate, to identify specific problems and issues and to develop a plan to move forward.

The process will involve thoughtful and respectful reflection, critical thinking and preparatory work before an action plan is crafted. Once first steps are taken, many believe that other steps will follow naturally. The focus should not be on condemnation or accusation, or devaluing the past, but rather on understanding how past practices may have privileged some to the exclusion of others, and a willingness to do things differently and better in the future.

Faculty and staff members generally spoke positively of their experience within the School. Several people commented that they found the School a healthy working environment where people are typically treated with decency and respect, and there is recognition of the importance of work-life balance. There were, nonetheless, comments made about incidents where colleagues felt that they had been treated dismissively by peers.

Some BIPOC students (past and present) commented on incidents where they had felt ignored, marginalized or treated with disrespect by peers or faculty members, and felt unsupported when they were struggling with schoolwork. They also believed that they did not feel safe in voicing these concerns. There was some commentary about dismissive, hostile and ill-informed comments that fell outside normal university etiquette, and about ill-judged responses to student comments and opinions, especially in public design reviews (“crits”).

Some students noted instances of peers and professors lacking awareness of how their thoughts and actions affect others, a problem that is exacerbated by hurtful comments posted on social media where disturbing views find an easy outlet. A much larger sample of student opinion would be required to determine whether one could generalize from these reports of marginalization, but the very fact that some students noted such incidents should encourage members of the School to reflect on and be mindful of what the Provost’s Report describes as “micro-aggressions” and how it can affect BIPOC students. (Provost’s Anti-Black Racism Action Plan – Student Experience, page 11). The students who raised the issues felt the problem originated more from a lack of awareness than from deliberate maliciousness, but they also emphasized that such lack of awareness is not an excuse and that people should make a personal commitment to self-education.

As noted in the Provost’s Plan “Students can find it difficult to know where and how to raise concerns about experiences of discrimination and isolation. Many can find the processes for raising such concerns complex and intimidating” (page 11). Any initiatives of the School to assist students who experience marginalization would contribute to a more supportive environment.

Several respondents suggested that the School should offer training about racism, in accord with the commitment of the University to “develop an online learning module on systemic

racism....( that) will be mandatory for all members of the University community.” (Provost’s Anti-Black Racism Action Plan – Student Experience - Action Item #4)

While highlighting areas of concern, a number of people noted that the School has a diverse support staff who make important contributions to the success of the programs. In addition, it was remarked by some that even if the student body is quite diverse, those who self-identify as Black and Indigenous are greatly under-represented.

Several respondents also commented on the importance of considering, in future discussions about the School’s strategic plan, the broader context of the architecture profession, where there remains a lack of diversity, with few Black and Indigenous practicing architects, and a continuing preponderance of men at the managerial level in architectural firms and in the construction industry. In the course of our discussions about racism, it became clear that, while the percentage of female professors has increased, there remains a need for the School, in its efforts to promote diversity, to continue to be attentive to issues of gender as well as that of race.

### **3- The Five Elements of the Provost’s Plan**

#### **3.1 The Student Experience**

Four aspects of the student experience were identified during the consultations: awareness of the School and its programs among prospective students; the application and admission process; orientation once in the School, and curriculum issues.

##### **1- Awareness of the School and its programs in secondary schools including CEGEPS, high schools and other schools in Canada and around the globe.**

The School and its programs are mostly known through word-of-mouth and are thus not much publicised in under-represented schools, less-privileged secondary schools, and schools in different parts of the city, province (eg Northern Quebec) and country. A number of initiatives were suggested to address this perceived gap:

a. Outreach: at the undergraduate level, development of a program designed to reach different high schools, CEGEPs, junior and even elementary schools to connect with students well before their final year of CEGEP or high school so that architecture and the School are a part of their educational and career consideration early.

These attempts could include classroom visits to junior grades to talk about architecture, dispel myths (eg “Can a girl be an architect?”) and plant a seed about the profession and

outline what to expect; more focused visits to grade 9, 10 and 11 classes; as well as outreach to CEGEPs. Such a program could involve current students, faculty and staff and alumni. It was suggested that a summer student could be hired to develop a schedule for visits (actual or virtual) to schools during the Fall semester.

Under-represented CEGEPS and schools could be expressly targeted, for instance CEGEPs in the northern part of Quebec but also in Montreal such as Dawson College which has a large student body but appears to send relatively few students to the School. (Some respondents commented that the principal reason for that is that Dawson's program tends to direct their graduates more towards the technical aspects of drafting rather than professional architecture programs).

The University has made a commitment "to enhance outreach and support for student applicants from McGill's most underrepresented student populations" (Provost's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan – Student Experience - Action Item #1). The Plan calls for the development of "a Student Leadership Program through which current McGill students who self-identify as members of equity-seeking groups – particularly Black and Indigenous students – will be recruited, selected, and funded to lead outreach initiatives with high schools and Cégeps across the Montreal area that have strong Black and/or Indigenous student representation" (page 14).

The School could be an active participant in this initiative and, it was suggested, could also connect with potential Indigenous students on reserves, perhaps pooling resources with other Schools to raise the profile of architecture among Indigenous people. Since there are few Indigenous architects, collaboration with other schools in showcasing their collective accomplishments would be valuable.

It was also noted that the School could reach out beyond the formal education system to identify prospective students, including mature students, from under-represented groups.

Efforts should be made to recognize, in appropriate ways, those faculty, staff, students and alumni who participate in outreach such as recognition of experiential learning for students, and recognition of service by faculty, staff and alumni.

b. Short-term in-house programs: The School could initiate opportunities for groups of high-school students to visit the School and possibly some offices of practising architects to see what architects do. Such opportunities are currently offered, but only timidly. A two- to three-week summer Discovery Program for high school and early CEGEP students to

introduce them to the study of architecture and heighten their knowledge of the opportunities that the study of architecture affords was also suggested.

c. Clearer communications: The message to prospective students should include heightening awareness of and addressing confusion about what architects actually do and how the built environment is important to everyone and affects their quality of life and well being.

Some comments were made that high school counsellors may direct interested students towards technical training rather than architecture programs as such. Effective communication should be able to shed light on the ways in which architecture contribute to addressing social problems like climate change, social justice, and sustainability so that prospective students see this career path as important in tackling global problems like, say, environmental science or bio-engineering. At the same time a caution was expressed by some individuals that the current program and industry still focuses primarily on “high-design” and that there would need to be a considerable shift in program focus if architecture’s potential contribution to pressing social issues is to be fully realized.

There could be a greater representation of diverse perspectives in pamphlets and promotional material about what being an architect involves. The use of different images and different voices would send a strong signal about the School’s values and priorities. This should be complemented by an enhanced web presence that encourages applications from a broader spectrum of students. The School could consider whether to reserve spaces for BIPOC students with mechanisms for accepting and admitting students from under-represented groups.

d. Graduate studies: It was noted that, at the master’s level, there is broad representation of students from Ontario and Quebec and internationally from Iran, China, the UK and Europe but not other parts of the world. The School could seek to establish formal relationships and partnerships with universities around the world with architecture programs, and actively recruit. Proper follow up with students who make admission enquiries would be beneficial. Some current international students at the School note that the process of application, admission and financial support should be much clearer to navigate, and that the website should be improved to make it is easier to navigate.

e. The Post-Professional Masters: this program attracted a very diverse group of students from around the world who could share their own cultural background and exchange valuable knowledge with each other about their built environments. The program is

currently temporarily closed, but it is important to remember that it holds appeal for students of a varied background and interests. Reviewing and potentially revamping this program was suggested and supported by a number of respondents.

### **1) The student application and admissions process.**

The current application and admissions process is seen by some as very opaque. Questions were raised about how the various requirements are weighted and whether the process is sufficiently inclusive to consider fairly the applications of students from diverse backgrounds. Specifically, the following questions were raised:

a. Admission criteria and process do already appear to encourage diversity in artistic skills and media. Concern was expressed that the traditional requirement for a pure and applied science background is overly restrictive, even if it was acknowledged that some background in science serves architecture students well. Changes implemented this past year have led to admissions criteria that better reflects the importance of the role of the humanities as well as the sciences; the requirements now include a 50:50 mix of Science and Humanities. Regardless of changes in admission requirements, the School should be alert to whether students from less privileged backgrounds have adequate opportunities to access science courses in topics like calculus.

b. Could the Admissions Committee itself be more diverse to ensure that, within the framework of admissions criteria, different perspectives on prospective student talents, skills and potential are brought to bear? It was suggested that a review and update of processes is needed and the possible inclusion of a student and an alumnus on the Committee.

c. When students from varying backgrounds present an admission portfolio with graphic styles that fall outside the norm, are they disadvantaged and potentially overlooked? Are there ways in which prospective students can receive more guidance about their portfolio before they submit? One suggestion was an on-line webinar on how to prepare a portfolio including the different ways in which creativity can be demonstrated, some of which may not, at first glance, seem relevant. The message could be conveyed and reinforced that if a form of artistic expression speaks, in some way, to the built environment, then it could be included.

d. Do current guidelines for the admission portfolio ensure an even playing field, recognizing that not all applicants have access to a wide range of materials and printing facilities and binding technologies? Digital portfolios were suggested as one approach to

addressing that concern and a decision was recently approved to allow such form of submission.

e. Is the process and rubric for assessing applications broad and flexible enough to allow for the unfamiliar, along with standard criteria like GPA (or equivalent) and portfolio? One suggestion was the addition of an interview to the admission process for a more personalized evaluation; but there are somewhat mixed reactions to that proposal, some raising issues from a logistical perspective or from the higher risk of unconscious biases colouring the interview process.

## **2) Student orientation, support, retention and engagement.**

The orientation process once entering the School is a key element in ensuring that students feel comfortable, and that they are in a safe (on multiple dimensions) and supportive environment. This process will be even more critical if incoming students become more diverse, reflecting different origins, experiences and background. The School appears to some to lack a culture of support for students so that, when they are having difficulties, they may feel intimidated and hesitate to ask for help for fear of longer term consequences for their education and career. Some suggestions for strengthening support for students included:

- a. The introduction of a more formal and extensive orientation program to ensure that all incoming students, both undergraduate and graduate, receive the information they need to successfully transition into their programs, feel welcomed and supported.
- b. Several people also commented on architectural workload, both among those within the University and those in practice and how the stereotype of architects working 24/7 and living extreme lifestyles can deter prospective students and put undue stress on current students. Clear studio rules and due dates help with time management and create good working habits that can be transferred into practice in due course.
- c. A mentoring program, including but not limited to peer mentoring, can foster student progress and success, especially currently when so much of the School's activities are virtual. There is great potential for mentoring to reduce student isolation, enhance support and promote student success.

### 3) Curriculum – content, learning objectives, pedagogy and learning styles/ways of thinking.

A major part of an anti-racism plan targets the curriculum. This is clearly expressed in the Provost's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan "Curricula in most programs do not reflect demographic diversity, notably the work of Black scholars" (page 11). This concern was clearly expressed during the consultations. The curriculum should address issues of race, diversity and inclusion while ensuring that the School's commitment to excellence is undiminished and the program continues to meet accreditation standards and requirements. There were many suggestions about how to address curriculum in a way that recognizes that there is more than one way of seeing the world:

a. Cultural references should be broad enough so that everyone feels their own cultural heritage is reflected. Students and several faculty members have observed that the curriculum is overall Eurocentric and does not sufficiently reflect diverse world views or contemporary architectural trends in different parts of the world. Broadening the lens to discuss different approaches to architecture and architectural movements would be an important step in decolonizing the curriculum.

In particular, students commented that some history courses are quite narrow in focus, whereas others take a more global approach. That being said, multi-faceted perspectives should be embedded/incorporated across the curriculum and not solely in a few courses. For example, Studio needs to be a reflection of the different student experiences and thus be assessed from multiple perspectives. Other curriculum components, such as the Global Studios, should also be reviewed and potentially reimaged through the lens of equity, diversity and inclusion to promote an expanded role for field work and experiential learning and ensure that the history and culture of a place being studied or visited are key elements in understanding its architecture.

b. Consideration should be given to how race/racism and the built environment can best be addressed in the curriculum. Students would welcome the opportunity to explicitly explore race in Architecture. The current Race and Space course, which evolved from a summer reading group, is seen as a very positive step and a good way for participants to learn about and better understand the issues. Its status should be actively considered as there is some support for it to become a required course. Not all interested students can currently take it because of the workload for their required courses.

c. To include BIPOC perspectives, attention needs to be directed towards learning more about different world views, cultures and concepts of space and its utilization. There may be very few practicing Black and Indigenous architects in Canada, yet their work should be made visible within the curriculum.

d. To broaden the knowledge base about BIPOC issues and practices it was suggested that collaborative approaches to course delivery should be considered. For example, members of the School could seek to partner with colleagues on campus in programs like African Studies, Indigenous Studies and Anthropology to co-deliver architecture courses with appropriate BIPOC content.

e. Some people explicitly commented that it behooves all instructors to broaden their curricula references and bring in non-European or North-American examples. Some instructors expressed hesitation about teaching content about which they had little background without the appropriate resources to learn about architectural practice and production in different parts of the globe. The development of a resource centre within the School would support such endeavours. The University's commitment to "Enhance capacity within Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) to support the development of inclusive pedagogies and curricular approaches..." means that campus resources may soon be available to assist instructors (Provost's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan – (Student Experience - Action Item #5).

f. Courses which focus on sustainable environmental design could include Indigenous content. In addition to Indigenous housing, consideration could be given to how public spaces like cultural centres, museums, performing arts and wellness centres can reflect Indigenous traditions and practices. An understanding of the history of design on reserves, such as residential schools and community centres, could, in contrast, highlight the disconnect with Indigenous traditions. Considerations of the intersections between settlers and Indigenous communities, already touched on in some studios, could also be expanded.

g. Housing problems in the Canadian North were identified by several respondents as an important area in Canadian society which could be highlighted in the curriculum. The School's role in this respect could be further enhanced if funding sources could be identified for travel and resources.

h. The curriculum should emphasize more various contemporary social frameworks to understand architecture. The importance of developing a profound understanding of people's needs, of knowing how architecture reacts to and works with society and how it can address inequities and hardships and be more socially relevant. The curriculum should foster awareness of how to make sense of individual and community needs. It should allow students to gain first-hand knowledge of cultural issues through visits to different communities, including less-privileged communities, where they can experience first-hand living conditions and public spaces.

i. Opportunities for students to get to know different parts of Quebec and Canada – the School's own "back yard" – are valuable in broadening perspectives and preparing for a future in which the lives, careers and expectations of architects may be very different from what it has been in the past. The School's engagement with local communities has historically been very strong and should remain important. Some have commented that, with time, this focus has diminished; yet recent faculty hires that wish to engage in community design would seem to address that concern. Studio teaching can intersect well with community concerns such as affordable housing, food insecurity, recreation, safety or whatever.

j. A combination of studio projects, visits, lectures from guest professors (in-person or virtual depending on resources), and exchanges would all contribute to enhancing student knowledge and increasing their sensitivity to the challenges of different cultural groups. Studios could be proposed that would address under-represented content with discussion among colleagues as to what to include and how best to deliver it in a studio setting.

k. Lectures by scholars from around the world could be expanded thanks to digital transmission, in order to enhance the diversity of presentations and the sharing of knowledge.

l. While supporting curriculum change, several respondents noted that much of the built environment reflects colonial history and it is important for graduates to continue to have a knowledge and an understanding of that corpus so that they can interact with it, while working towards bringing different perspectives.

### 3.1 Research and knowledge

School members, both faculty and students, recognize and value the opportunity for individuals to undertake research in areas that they deem important and/or interesting. As the School's membership becomes more diverse, so too will knowledge and perspectives. But there are initiatives that could and should be taken to enhance diversity now:

- a. The School could be pro-active in identifying and attracting BIPOC scholars, providing the support that will facilitate their retention and active participation in advancing and sharing knowledge.
- b. Members of the School should reflect on how the knowledge gained and transmitted in the topics they are teaching and researching are implicated in racism. How can syllabi and research programs acknowledge that dimension?
- c. Research conducted by under-represented group members should be included in course reference materials and extra efforts made to diversify, to forge research alliances with universities and scholars from around the globe and to involve diverse local scholars in team research, knowledge generation and transmission.
- d. Given the ease and new prevalence of on-line scholarly activities, there is an opportunity to reach out to academics and practising architects across the globe, and involve them in research in appropriate ways. Such scholars could contribute to broadening the curriculum and giving students the chance to gain knowledge of different architectures and pedagogical approaches.

### 3.2 Outreach

Outreach to prospective students and new staff members should be considered through a racism and sexism lens, to ensure that the outreach model utilized does not appear patronizing or "missionary" focused. Respondents expressed the need for constructive dialogue about how outreach will be conducted, by whom and how people can be incentivized to participate. Some

respondents expressed a sense that the School and its members had become isolated from the wider community and urged the building of stronger community links. The following points were raised:

- a. The need for outreach to potential students to raise awareness of and encourage application to the School has already been emphasized in this report. But some have also emphasized the need to organize outreach activities when students are seeking internships or when they graduate and seek to join the workforce more permanently. It was noted that this can be more challenging for BIPOC graduates as well as those who are not fully fluent in French.
- b. A Placement Officer could play an important role in helping graduates, especially those who do not have the same level of connections as others, to make the transition into professional practice. A process was initiated to raise funds to fill and support such a position. Unfortunately, the impact of COVID-19 has put this initiative on hold but the intent is to press ahead once the current hiring freeze is lifted. The involvement of School alumni could be a key asset in finding internship opportunities. Some commentators noted that the School has a large alumni base, and that a more active approach to building a strong and diverse network would serve the School's interests while addressing the view expressed by some alumni that the School does not reach out to them regularly enough.
- c. One issue that was raised by participants from differing groups and in many different ways was the importance of clear and timely communication throughout the School: between the leadership and the faculty, staff and students; among faculty members themselves; between the School and the Faculty and the University; and with the community more broadly. For example, while Town Hall meetings are useful for conveying information, they are not seen as the best way of soliciting feedback from various groups, particularly if there is a sense of hierarchy that deters individuals from contributing their points of view. Opportunities for all members of the School to provide input into key decisions should be maximized.

Moreover, the School is seen as reactive rather than proactive in communicating about racist issues – some respondents commented that they had heard more on these issues from the institutions from which they had previously graduated than from the School. Several alumni also commented on the fact that they had heard little if anything from the School since their graduation and expressed disappointment that this was the case.

d. As noted earlier there is support for reinvigorating the School's connections to the local community and this echoes the comments in the Provost's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan that "Situating within Montreal, McGill University can and should do more to connect actively with its surrounding communities, including the Montreal Black community...." (page 24).

### 3.3 Human Resources

Recruitment, retention and support of diverse faculty and staff are key components of any human resource strategy aimed at equity and inclusion. The workforce can also reflect greater diversity through hiring decisions of part-time instructors, guest critics, and visiting scholars (in person or remotely). The following ideas emerged:

a. Recruitment will involve careful definition and description of positions to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible and do not appear to exclude particular groups or individuals. It is acknowledged that the School, implementing the University's requirement to take pro-active measures to identify potential candidates for positions from under-represented groups, has made some progress, especially by increasing the number of women faculty. The University's process is seen as well-developed and coherent and one that can lead to productive outcomes if not undermined by old habits.

Conscious and determined efforts should be made to develop and grow a list of potential BIPOC candidates that is as wide-ranging as possible so that a strong network of possible recruits from Canada and other parts of the world is established, recognizing both Canada's and McGill's hiring policies.

b. Search committees should be as diverse as possible and continue to include faculty and students.

c. Once applications have been received by the School, their assessment should be made following consistent and transparent criteria. But the search committee and the School leadership should recognize that there are different forms of accomplishments, avoiding, however inadvertently, biases or stereotypes.

d. Retention and support - the overall objective is to build a sense of community where all members, regardless of race, gender, background or experience feel that they are part of and connected to the School. They should feel that they have allies so as not to

feel isolated, and that an undue burden does not fall on them because they are in a minority (“the burden of representation”). This will include pro-actively orienting new colleagues to the School and the community, mentoring them as they undertake new responsibilities, and guiding them as they approach milestones like tenure and promotion and submit research grant applications, to facilitate their success and retention. A formal mentoring program was introduced some years ago and it is recognized that varied approaches, including peer to peer and group mentoring, can all be valuable in supporting faculty and staff.

d. It is important to acknowledge that instructors are important role models for students and that the more diverse the professoriate, the more likely diverse students and prospective students will see themselves as integral and valued members of the School. In this context, it was particularly noted that there are many students of Asian heritage enrolled in the School but that there is currently no faculty member of Asian heritage. BIPOC scholars from different countries and architectural traditions can contribute to lecture series, offsetting costs through technology-facilitated presentations.

e. The School relies heavily on the engagement and contributions of practising architects who serve as part-time instructors and guest critics. Some instructors commented that they have made an effort to invite a more diverse group of guest critics and feel that this can prove a fruitful way of exposing students to more varied role models and different perspectives. Inviting guest architects who are working in situations other than in an architectural office can also be valuable in demonstrating different career options.

### 3.4 Space

Architects are well placed to be able to consider the relationship between space and inclusion, the symbolism of the built environment, and principles of design that help promote inclusion of all members of the School community. Given the current pandemic but also seeing beyond, there is also an opportunity to think about virtual as well as physical space that is welcoming to diverse individuals, does not “ghettoize” anyone and promotes a sense of belonging. The following suggestions were made:

a. While each student has their studio space which is an important part of their sense of belonging and promotes connections with fellow students at the same program stage, there is a greater challenge for students to interact and make meaningful connections

outside their year given the current paucity of common social space in the school. Some feel there is plenty of space but that it could be used more creatively to address the desire for inter-connections among all members of the School community, including shared tables or “nooks and crannies” to facilitate group projects, as well as enhancing opportunities for “cultural spaces.”

b. Space also plays a key role in supporting and facilitating faculty research and knowledge production and there have been problems in securing appropriate space to support grant applications and conduct research. Resolving these issues will require further engagement with the University’s facilities management to emphasize the School’s needs (and expertise) in space planning and allocation.

c. At present the School does not have state-of-the-art workshop and technical facilities, key components in schools of architecture. The feasibility of improving the School facilities should actively be explored.

d. In the Provost’s Anti-Black Racism Action Plan there is reference to the importance of symbolism in space through the naming of spaces, the display of sculptures, photographs and portraits and other iconography. The School should review such features to determine if all artifacts currently displayed are appropriate or whether there are some that should be reassessed where they may have undertones that connote racism or exclusion. The School should also determine how its physical space, attributes and iconography could be more inclusive of its BIPOC members.

#### **4- Next steps**

This Working Paper provides a digest of information shared during the consultations. Members of the School community can consider the concerns, ideas and suggestions they have collectively outlined, along with the items detailed in the students’ Call for Action, the Provost’s Anti-Black Racism Action Plan and any additional inputs. As noted earlier, the intention is to establish a Working Group within the School whose role will be to develop an anti-racism plan, including priorities and specific actions and timelines. Once debated and adopted, this plan will be incorporated into an over-arching strategic plan for the School which will be developed at a later date.

## **Appendix A**

### **Data of Consultation Process**

Consultations with members and/or alumni of the Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture, McGill University, were held between September 17<sup>th</sup> and October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

Facilitator and writer of this report: Dr. Sheila Brown, Higher Educational consultant and President Emerita of Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax.

Nineteen consultation sessions of 50 – 90 minutes each were held, with a total of 44 people consulted over a 34 day period. Most were in small groups of 2-5 people with 7 one-on-one sessions, due to scheduling issues and availability. All testimonies reported in this document have been kept anonymous.

Demographics of the individuals consulted—all of whom are or have been affiliated to the Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture:

- 1- 15 current and post-retirement full-time faculty
- 2- 6 administrative staff
- 3- 12 students, including leaders of GASA and ASA
- 4- 4 part-time instructors
- 5- 7 alumni, 4 of whom were also part-time instructors

## Appendix B

### Resources

The following is a very preliminary list of resources that, along with other references, may prove helpful with respect to decolonizing the curriculum. It is understood that the working group will complement and refine such a list.

Charles, E. 2019 Decolonizing the Curriculum. Insights 32(1)  
<https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/28953/1/28953.pdf>

Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History: A Report and Resource for Change. Royal Historical Society, Oct. 2018  
[https://files.royalhistsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/08171054/RHS\\_race\\_report\\_2018.pdf](https://files.royalhistsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/08171054/RHS_race_report_2018.pdf)

Akhtar, S. & Finn, M. 2019 Race, Ethnicity & Equality in UK History RHS Roadmap for Change Update.  
<https://files.royalhistsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/17204804/RHS-REEWG-Roadmap-Update-Dec-2019-FINAL.pdf>

In addition, the following two projects were mentioned during the consultations:

The Canadian Centre for Architecture's project on post-colonial perspectives on architecture in Africa:  
<https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/61282/centring-africa-postcolonial-perspectives-on-architecture>

The architecture of Africville in Nova Scotia:  
<https://architecture49.com/en/portfolio/projects/africville-interpretive-centre>  
<http://shyronn.com/portfolio/rebuilding-africville/>

The following resources may also be helpful in considering how best to include Indigenous knowledge in the curriculum:

Gaudry, A. 2016 Paved with Good Intentions: Simply Requiring Indigenous Content is Not Enough. Active History.

<http://activehistory.ca/2016/01/paved-with-good-intentions-simply-requiring-indigenous-content-is-not-enough/>

Gaudry, A. & Lorenz, D. 2018 Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *AlterNative* 14(3). 218-227.

Pete, S. 100 Ways to Indigenize and decolonize academic programs and courses.

<https://www.uregina.ca/president/assets/docs/president-docs/indigenization/indigenize-decolonize-university-courses.pdf>

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