Background and Context

McGill University presented its Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism on September 30, 2020. The plan was adopted in the context of global social and political mobilization challenging systemic racism and calling on institutions – including universities – to act. The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) has its own unique role to play.

The FMHS tasked the Social Accountability and Community Engagement (SACE) Office to develop a Faculty Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism that aligns with the University’s Plan, while addressing specific needs for the health professions and sciences.
Background and Context

McGill’s *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan 2020-2025*, developed in broad consultation with stakeholders across the University, is oriented along five axes:

- 1. Student Experience
- 2. Research & Knowledge
- 3. Outreach
- 4. Workforce
- 5. Physical Space

The Faculty Action Plan is aligned with these *five axes*, deepening and elaborating upon commitments within the EDI Plan to confront anti-Black racism.
Background and Context

• While this Action Plan is aligned with the University’s EDI Strategic Plan, it is critical to signal its distinctiveness, both in terms of its roots and rationale.

• Both this Faculty Plan and the University Action Plan seek to initiate a process of acknowledgement of our University’s historic connections to the transatlantic slave trade and its enduring legacies. The trade in African persons between Europe and the Americas endured more than 400 years. It resulted in the enslavement of 10 to 12 million persons of African descent and cost millions of others their lives. Slavery in the Americas reached into all institutions established during colonial settlement, including Canadian universities. The legacies of transatlantic slavery find reflection in ongoing racial subordination and systemic anti-Blackness as witnessed through persistent pejorative stereotypes about African and Black persons, as well as their stark underrepresentation in the workforce, in leadership positions and in higher education.
Background and Context

This Action Plan is informed by:

• A series of reports and materials developed over time, which reflect how some Black and other racialized members of the community may experience isolation or discrimination.

• Insights shared in two consultation sessions reserved for Black FMHS community members and one debriefing event.

• McGill’s Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism.

The FMHS will also work in collaboration with the Provost’s Office for more specific action items included in the University’s Action Plan and EDI Plan (e.g., Student Leadership Program, physical space dedicated to racialized students, online learning module on systemic racism, etc.).
Background and Context

This Action Plan is also informed by consultations with:

• Supporting Young Black Students (SYBS, student group)
• Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Equity Committee
• Education Leadership Council
• Faculty Leadership Council (FLC) and Faculty Council
• Deanery Executive
• Executive Director, Administration and Operations
• Indigenous Health Professions Program

We thank these groups and their members for their important work and input over time to advance equity on our campuses.
Guiding principles

• At the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, we seek to be relevant to the societies we serve and the greater global context through excellence in our missions of education, research and service. Within our health professions and sciences programs, we provide training and educational opportunities that address the needs of the societies we serve. We promote diversity within the Faculty, as defined in our diversity statement, understanding that promoting our internal diversity will better serve our diverse communities.
Budgetary Commitment

• Budgetary considerations will be submitted to the Dean’s Operations Committee for review and approval.
1. Student Experience
Members of the FMHS have told us that we should:

• Put in place a service that would be in charge of addressing concerns/complaints of Black students who experience discrimination/microaggressions while at McGill. We need to think about microaggression in clinical settings for residents (patients, other health professionals) and reporting mechanisms.

• Explore the development of student exchange programs between the FMHS and The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica and/or other campuses in the Caribbean (e.g., Trinidad, Bahamas, Barbados, etc.).

• Consider potential targets for recruitment of medical and health sciences students from the Caribbean and African countries. Clear targets, timelines and accountability for achieving (local census-guided) representation for Black students across all health professional programs (i.e., 6.8% in Montreal).
Members of the FMHS have told us that we should:

• Facilitate the creation of safe spaces to encourage the critical conversations that are necessary to advance understanding of anti-Black racism for Black students as well as our allies.

• Collect and publish socio-demographic (disaggregated) data across all disciplines and at all levels of study. Support access to scholarships and bursaries for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

• Consider partnerships with one or more leading community organizations that support access to higher education through scholarships for underrepresented students, including Black students (e.g., Black Academic Scholarship Fund, etc.).

• Introduce mentorship programs (student, faculty and/or alumni-led) to support prospective applicants during the application process and throughout the professional training program.

• Enhance support of student-led initiatives already in existence in the FMHS and recognize such efforts to encourage sustainability.
Members of the FMHS have told us that:

- Just as we have presentations where patients share their experience with illness or human trafficking, we could also invite patients who have had negative experiences with the health care system.

- We provide more support to students who are in medicine but not in health professional programs. Moreover, graduate students receive very little support compared to students in health professional programs (e.g., mental health resources, seats at the table on EDI committees).

- We should host an annual workshop like the Graduate Teaching Workshops offered by T-Pulse, with a mixture of presentations and interactive hands-on training (e.g., scenarios, case studies) along with self-reflection (e.g., cultural competence, history of racism, intersections of race and other identities, etc.).

- We could host a career panel inviting doctors who—because of their race, sexual orientation or religion—have been discriminated against in the workplace and allow them to talk about their experience, how they dealt with it and what advice they have for future health professionals.
Student Experience – Action Item 1

The FMHS commits to:

• **Hosting a Black-led event to help inform the Faculty’s Action Plan.**
  The SACE Office organized a special Black-led event on June 22, 2020 to discuss the effects that systemic and overt racism have on Black people and the community as a whole. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences, feelings and concerns. A report was produced following the event. This report was presented to the FLC on September 17, 2020 and helped inform this Action Plan.

• **Next Step:** Present report to Faculty leadership and post report on SACE website.

  **Timeline:**
  • January 2021
Student Experience – Action Item 2

The FMHS commits to:

• **Training members of the Faculty on systemic racism, microaggressions and effective allyship.**
  
The SACE Office is hosting a series of allyship and skills-building events as part of this commitment. The SACE Office organized a session for faculty members, staff and students on July 13, 2020, to discuss the skills and tools that move us from simply standing with the community to taking purposeful action towards dismantling the structures of racism that foster oppression. A second workshop is focused on more concrete actions and approaches to allyship.

• **Next Step:** Second event scheduled for February 15, 2021.

**Timeline:**

• July 2020

• February 2021
Student Experience – Action Items 3-4

The FMHS commits to:

• **Organizing a Black Faculty member networking event for students, faculty and staff, and creating a “Black Caucus” list.**
  
  SACE has created a preliminary mailing list of Black students, faculty and staff in the FMHS.

• **Hosting Faculty Black History Month events.**

**Timeline:**

• December 2020

• February 2021
The FMHS commits to improving equity and representation within the graduate student body.

• Among actions taken to improve representation are the presentation of a **graduate student diversity survey update**: Presented by Aimee Ryan, Associate Dean, Biomedical BSc, Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs to FLC.

• **Next Step**: Survey and analysis of results to be presented to Faculty leadership.

• Interventions proposed will likely be multi-faceted.

**Timeline:**

• Winter 2021
The FMHS commits to:

- **Providing equity training**: Introduced this 2020 academic year for MDCM Admissions Committee members.

- **Next Step**: SACE Office to initiate discussions with School of Physical and Occupational Therapy/Ingram School of Nursing/School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

**Timeline:**

- November 2020
Student Experience – Action Item 7

The FMHS commits to:

- **Hosting a webinar series for pre-med Black students (University and CEGEP students).** These events are meant to answer questions about admission to the McGill School of Medicine. During the free webinar, current McGill Black medical students will talk about their journey to medicine. We will provide information on the medical school admission process and share tips and resources on how to prepare for every step during the process. There will also be a question period where concerns about pursuing any health care field will be addressed.

**Timeline:**

- October 7, 2020
- February 2021
Student Experience – Action Item 8

As part of its efforts to improve equity and representation within the Faculty, the FMHS commits to:

• **Disseminating student demographic information**: Posted, together with action plans, on the SACE website to ensure transparency.

**Timeline:**
• April 2021
Student Experience – Action Item 9

The FMHS commits to:

• **Creating a Black Health Lead job description**: To oversee development and implementation of a coordinated long-term action plan to increase the number of Black students in all health-related professional and graduate programs based on identified needs and priorities in Black communities.

**Timeline**:

• 2020 - 2021
2. Research & Knowledge
Members of the FMHS have told us that:

• We must work harder to enroll more Black people/patients in clinical research trials.
• We need to support research/knowledge acquisition to better inform best practices in health care for the Black population.
• We need more collaboration with the Institute of Health Sciences Education to do diversity research.
As part of its efforts to address racism and microaggressions, the FMHS commits to:

• **Creating faculty development and leadership sensitization on addressing racism and microaggressions within graduate studies.**

  **Timeline:**
  - Winter – Spring 2021

• In addition to providing training within graduate studies, the Faculty commits to broader training for leaders and teachers on systemic racism and microaggressions.

  **Timeline:**
  - By June 30, 2021
Research & Knowledge – Action Item 12

The FMHS commits to:

• **Initiating conversations** with Faculty’s School of Physical and Occupational Therapy, Ingram School of Nursing, and School of Communication Sciences and Disorders to discuss curricular content.

**Timeline:**

• Fall 2020
Student Experience – Action Item 13

The FMHS commits to:

• **Providing graduate studies curricular content support**: Explore feasibility of developing a Racism in Science and Biomedical Research elective course.

**Timeline:**
• By September 2021

• **Undergraduate Medical Education Curricular Update**: Content in all courses, specific systemic racism material.

**Timeline:**
• By December 31, 2021
Research & Knowledge – Action Item 14

The FMHS commits to:

• Developing content about racism and anti-racism within the curricula for Postgraduate Medical Education.

Timeline:

• By June 30, 2021
3. Outreach
Members of the FMHS have told us that:

• We should engage in outreach to Black communities in Montreal, including partnerships with high schools, CEGEPs and leading Black and other underserved community organizations, to develop effective pipeline programs and expand the pool of students eligible for recruitment to the health professions and sciences programs over time.

• We should conduct outreach earlier than high school for Black students.
Outreach – Action Item 15

As part of its efforts to engage with the Faculty’s broader community in Montreal and across Quebec, the FMHS commits to:

- **Consulting with the external community**: a Citizen’s Forum on Black Representation in the Health Sciences is being organized in collaboration with the Université de Montréal.

**Timeline**:
- April 14, 2021
Outreach – Action Item 16

To improve equity and representation within the Faculty’s student body, the FMHS commits to:

• **Providing equity training**: Introduced this 2020 academic year for MDCM Admissions Committee members.

• **Next Step**: SACE Office to initiate discussions with School of Physical and Occupational Therapy/Ingram School of Nursing/School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

**Timeline:**

• November 2020
Outreach – Action Item 17

The FMHS commits to:

• **Implementing a Black students’ pathway:** Undergraduate Medical Education, School of Physical and Occupational Therapy, Ingram School of Nursing, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders have expressed commitment to develop and implement.
  • **Applying to the Sustainability Projects Fund:** the SACE Office successfully applied to this fund to support the development of the Black Student Pathway Program and the outreach Community of Support program.

**Timeline:**
• Fall 2021
Outreach – Action Item 18-19

The FMHS commits to:

• Working, through University Advancement, with our alumni and donor communities to increase scholarships and student aid opportunities that will enhance supports for students – at the undergraduate, master’s and doctoral levels – from McGill’s most underrepresented student demographic groups, including Black students.

• Enhance financial and administrative support of student-led initiative SYBS to encourage sustainability.

Timeline:

• Winter 2021
Outreach – Action Item 20

The FMHS commits to:

• **Appointing at least one Outreach Coordinator** with experience in working with diverse Black communities.

**Timeline:**
Winter 2021
4. Workforce
Members of the FMHS have told us that:

• Statistics on the (almost non-existent) number of Black professors are staggering, even though you can see it when on campus. It would be helpful to explore the reasons behind this lack of representation in more depth.

• We need mentorship and other support for Black faculty members, with clear measures to ensure equity in all hiring, retention and promotion practices throughout the career lifespan (recruitment to retirement).

• We need training for staff and faculty members on microaggressions for all the different units and schools.

• We need mandatory education to raise awareness and understanding of what constitutes anti-Black racism, including its origins, historical and contemporary relationship to, and legacy of, slavery (e.g., social determinants of health). This should also include mandatory training in socio-culturally sensitive (health) care.

• We need a mandatory Black racism and realities program akin to “It takes all of us.”
Members of the FMHS have told us that:

- We need a monthly support meeting for peer informal mentoring.
- We need more representation within student body, Faculty, staff and clinician leaders.
- We need Black psychotherapists/counsellors.
- We should add anti-racism to the institution’s mission statement.
The FMHS commits to:

- As stated in Action Item #3, the Faculty commits to creating a Black Caucus that includes faculty and staff members.
  - SACE has created a preliminary mailing list of Black students, faculty and staff.
- The Faculty also commits to training on systemic racism, microaggressions and effective allyship (Action Item #2).

**Timeline:**
- November 2020 – February 2021
Workforce – Action Item 21

As part of its commitment to improving equity and diversity within the workforce, the FMHS will:

- **Share Faculty demographic information:** Faculty diversity report to be presented to Dean.
- **Circulate a work environment survey (for staff)**

**Timeline:**
- March 2021
- April 2021
Workforce – Action Item 22

As part of its commitment to improving equity and diversity within the Faculty, the FMHS will:

• **Review hiring practices and EDI training for staff**

Timeline:
• April 2021
Workforce – Action Item 23

To improve staff representation within equity-based decision-making, the FMHS commits to:

• Appointing a staff member (technical, clerical or support staff) to the Faculty Equity Committee

Timeline:

• April 2021
5. Physical Space
Members of the FMHS have told us that:

• We should move the James McGill statue to a museum: consultation participants understand that some feel the statue is part of McGill’s heritage, and feel that its placement in a museum could provide the opportunity to preserve the monument while giving historical context.

• We should support Black History Month activities with a focus on health issues common across Black populations.

• We should hold a joint event for Black History Month with the Sociocultural Consultation and Interpretation Services at the Montreal Children's Hospital of the McGill University Health Centre.

• We should establish a Black Resource Centre that would include a mission of preserving and celebrating Black culture, history and life through programmatic and service efforts beneficial to the entire campus community.
Physical Space – Action Item 24

The FMHS commits to:

• **Developing accountability around equity and the learning/work environment** that is aligned with University Action Plan targets for recruitment of Black staff and tenured faculty.

**Timeline:**

• Winter 2021
Physical Space – Action Item

The FMHS commits to:

• **Promoting and supporting Black History Month within the Faculty**, as stated in Action Item #4. The SACE Office will organize events each year to celebrate Black History Month.

Timeline:

• February 2021