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# Memorandum

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Office of the Co-Acting Provost & VP (Academic)  
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**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Angela Campbell, Associate Provost (Equity & Academic Policies)

**SUBJECT:** Annual Report on the Action Plan to address Anti-Black Racism

**DATE:** December 7, 2022

**DOCUMENT #:** D22-29

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  INFORMATION  APPROVAL/DECISION

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<b>ISSUE</b>	The Annual Report on the implementation of McGill’s Action Plan to address Anti-Black Racism (“Action Plan”) is present for information.
<b>BACKGROUND &amp; RATIONALE</b>	McGill presented the Action Plan in 2020, since which time work has been undertaken to uphold its ambitious commitments to enhance the representation and flourishing of Black students, faculty, and staff.
<b>PRIOR CONSULTATION</b>	The Action Plan was developed in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders across the McGill community. The Annual Report was presented to the Joint Board-Senate Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee for information on November 24, 2022.
<b>SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The Action Plan’s implementation has led to the establishment of diverse resources that will uphold sustained work to address anti-Black racism over the life of the Action Plan and beyond.
<b>IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS</b>	Continued work to meet the commitments set out in the Action Plan. The Annual Report will be presented to the Board of Governors on December 15, 2022, for information.
<b>MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL</b>	N/A
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Appendix A: Annual Report on the Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism

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COMMITMENT

ACTION

IMPACT

# ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Annual Report 2021-2022



McGill

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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

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*McGill University is located on land which long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.*



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## Message from Angela Campbell

### Co-Acting Provost & Vice-Principal Academic Associate Provost, Equity & Academic Policies

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I am delighted to present, along with my colleagues in the Equity Team and the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan Working Group, this second annual report on McGill's Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism ("Action Plan"). I am privileged to work with a group of brilliant and dedicated colleagues committed to ensuring that the Action Plan shines a light on Black excellence within our university community and that Black students, faculty, and staff at McGill are welcomed, included, and supported in their flourishing. In this regard, it is crucial also to recognize the important contributions of groups such as the Black Students' Network, the McGill African Students' Society, and the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus.\*

Advancing equity work within an institutional framework requires a commitment to stay the course over the long term, so as to move from promises to action with unwavering determination and humility. These are the values that our team in the Provost's Office has endeavored to bring to the mandate we have to promote equity and anti-racism at McGill. As demonstrated throughout this report, while there is no doubt that much work remains to be done to address anti-Black racism, members of the McGill community have taken up in earnest the commitments set out in the Action Plan. Over the last year, some important and measurable progress has been made. This is uplifting and I hope it serves to energize sustained movement forward on the crucial efforts that must continue to be made in alignment with the Action Plan for the good of the entire McGill community.

### **Angela Campbell**

Report Co-Author  
Co-Acting Provost & Vice-Principal Academic  
Associate Provost, Equity and Academic Policies

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\* See Appendix to this Report, which includes references to the Caucus' Statements.





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**Message from Richmond Yeboah**  
**Report Co-Author**  
**PhD Candidate, School of Information Studies**

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In last year's Annual Report on the Action Plan, I wrote that I hope the commitment to the Action Plan would continue and perhaps increase in subsequent years, with more individuals across the University taking up the task of fighting anti-Black racism. I also expressed the need to publicize the various supports available to Black and racialized students. Well, working on the updates this year and having the opportunity to get a more inside view, I would say there is great improvement on what was accomplished in the first year of the Action Plan's implementation. At this point, I can say that the Action Plan exists not only on paper but is gradually being concretized with the help of the dedicated ABR working group. I would like to call on the McGill Black community to maintain a united front and make use of the supports outlined in the Action Plan.

**Richmond B. Yeboah**

Report Co-Author

PhD Candidate, McGill School of Information Studies



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## Message from Terri E. Givens

### Provost's Academic Lead & Advisor

### Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism

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The past year has been one of many accomplishments but also many opportunities to learn from students, colleagues, and the community. A strategy like the one McGill is pursuing will need to evolve over time. As new challenges arise, it is important that stakeholders old and new have the opportunity to learn from what we have done up to this point and to provide feedback that can help move the strategy forward in a meaningful way. I am grateful to all who have contributed to this effort, and I look forward to continuing the work that will help McGill University reach its potential for being a welcoming space to all.

### **Terri E. Givens**

Provost's Academic Lead & Advisor  
Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism





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## Message from Karen Diop

### Program Manager

### McGill Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism

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I believe these two years of implementing the Action Plan are promising and have been marked by notable and concrete successes, but above all, by multiple learning experiences where readjustments have sometimes been necessary.

I am grateful for the contributions and involvement of each member of the student, faculty, and staff community from whom I am continuously learning. There is still much work to be done, and I always remind myself that we must move forward with humility and caution.

### **Karen Diop**

Program Manager

Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism

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## How to Read this Report

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This report provides an overview of activities undertaken pursuant to the Action Plan over the 2021–2022 academic year (September 2021 to August 2022 inclusive). It reflects the structure of the Action Plan, which is organized along five principal themes: students, research, outreach, workforce, and space. These five priorities also find reflection in the themes around which McGill's [Strategic EDI Plan](#) is organized. The present report focuses on setting out the actions undertaken across our campuses over the past year to continue the complex, extensive work necessary for our community to understand and meaningfully address anti-Black racism.

This report seeks to document as fully as possible recent progress on the Action Plan's implementation. Quantitative data are provided where available. The balance of the information is descriptive. As was the case last year, we have aimed also to elicit some voices from various members of Black communities at McGill and beyond so that this annual report might reflect their perspectives. Quotes integrated throughout this report do not purport to be representative, but rather offer insights from McGill's and Montreal's Black communities as to the relevance of the Action Plan and McGill's work in its regard thus far.

The report concludes with some reflections and indications on the areas that will be prioritized for Year 3 of work taken up pursuant to the Action Plan.

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## Background and Context

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While this Action Plan is anchored to McGill's overarching EDI commitments, notably as set out in its Strategic EDI Plan, it is also distinct in its rationale and aspirations.

Notably, the Action Plan seeks 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 lasted for 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 underrepresentation in the workforce, in leadership positions, and in higher education across the country.

As McGill embarks on its third century as a world-class institution of higher education, it has both the responsibility and the opportunity to address these barriers that have deprived Black persons of full access to opportunities – or that have limited their capacity to flourish – on our campuses. This work will allow us to do better in our express commitment, set out within our university's mission, to the principles of equity and inclusiveness. It is against this background and within this context that work under the Action Plan is taken up at McGill.

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## Key Accomplishments 2021 – 2022

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1. Recruitment and appointment of 13 new Black faculty members of outstanding caliber across a range of disciplines. Overall, 31 Black tenure-track and tenured faculty at McGill self-identify as Black.
2. Establishment and implementation of the Black Candidate Pathway with 23 newly admitted Black Students in Medicine and Health Sciences. Special kudos and gratitude to the SACE Office team, including former Director, Dr. Saleem Razack, Victoire Kpade, MDCM '22, and Dr. Anita Brown-Johnson (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences).
3. Establishment of a dedicated meeting space for Black Students at McGill.
4. Creation of the “Pick Your Path for Black Youth” Program for prospective Black McGill students, which is part of McGill’s Branches Community Outreach Program.
5. Launch of the Internal Internships Pilot (IIP) Program for Black staff.
6. Continued outreach to and relationship-building with Montreal’s Black communities, including through the Advisory Panel on Black Student Life, community internships, and the ABR Community Newsletter.
7. Completion of the *Final Report of the Working Group on African and Black Studies*, led by Professors Khalid Medani and Debra Thompson, with collaboration from the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus.

Each of these initiatives is described throughout this Report, in addition to other developments anchored to the Action Plan that began or were enhanced throughout the reference year.



Celebrating Black Grad 2022

Photo Credit: Kojo Chang-Jones / Black Students Network

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## Detailed Actions 2021 – 2022

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### THEME 1: STUDENT EXPERIENCE

#### 1/ Student Demographic Survey

##### COMMITMENT

Understand and analyze its student demographic landscape through conducting a student demographic survey. Survey data will be disaggregated to be able to discern the representativeness of specific racialized and ethnic groups (e.g., Black students). Analyses will be undertaken with reference to population data for Montreal, Quebec, and Canada. Informed by these analyses, measures will be designed and deployed to enhance outreach and support for student applicants from McGill's most underrepresented student populations.

##### ACTION UPDATE

- The student EDI survey has launched and currently has a response rate of 47.9%. Among respondents:
  - 4.4% overall self-identify as Black students;
  - 4.9% of students who are Quebec residents self-identify as Black;
  - 3.5% of Canadians from other provinces self-identify as Black; and
  - Among international students, 3.1% of American students self-identify as Black.
- Black student representation by Faculty ranges from 2.2% (B.A. & B.Sc.) to 8.8% (School of Continuing Studies).

#### 2/ Expand Institutional Supports for Racialized Students

##### COMMITMENT

Expand institutional supports for racialized students. Specific measures will include:

- Appointment of at least one Wellness Advisor or Counsellor in Student Services with expertise in connection with the psychological impacts of racism, including systemic and anti-Black racism.
- Appointment of a Black Student Affairs Liaison to facilitate the sharing of student concerns and questions with McGill's administration and to provide Black students with guidance and information about resources and supports on and off campus.
- Extension of administrative support and budget for: Black Grad, Black History Month, Youth Day.

## **ACTION UPDATE**

- Student Services surveyed McGill's Black student population to identify support resources and programs that would expand existing offerings and be especially helpful. Respondents reported high interest in access to Black counsellors/mental health professionals with training in racial trauma. They also expressed the importance of Black student support and therapy groups.
- Counseling clients at the Wellness Hub completed a demographic form at intake. Of those clients (n = 3103) who completed the form between May 1, 2021 and May 30, 2022: 44% were BIPOC students.
- During Black History Month 2022, Hub Peer Supporters collaborated with student groups that prioritize and support BIPOC students - particularly those from Black communities - to highlight educational and social factors impacting their communities. Events focusing on and raising awareness about Black student mental health and supports were convened in collaboration with the Black Student Network.
- All applications for needs-based student financial aid – both at the time of admission and in-course – now allow students to (optionally) self-identify along race-based or other demographic lines. Measures have been put in place to boost financial support to assist with tuition and living support and to encourage timely degree completion.
- In support of Branches' Black Youth Outreach initiatives, McGill provided special financial literacy workshops for Montreal- and Toronto-based high school participants and their parents and pledged \$2000 awards to participants who completed sessions known as "McGill Mondays" if they ultimately applied and are admitted to McGill. Students receive a commitment letter outlining eligibility and the process for "cashing in" the \$2000 commitment. Twelve high school students have received letters to date. In 2022-23, this program will include both high school and CEGEP students, with 30 participants expected.
- Thanks to the following donors, McGill now offers several entrance and in-course bursaries dedicated or with preference to Black students. These accompany other bursaries dedicated to underrepresented students more broadly:
  - Baylis bursary
  - Cadet Foundation bursary
  - St. Sauveur Brotherhood bursary
  - Wolcott bursary
  - Mabel & Allan MacKenzie Family bursary
- Enrolment Services and the Black Student Affairs Liaison continued to collaborate to ensure a smooth and priority referral pathway for students expressing financial difficulties.
- Financial commitments for the Black Grad, Black History Month, and Youth Day were allocated and transferred.

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*Over the past year, I had the distinct honour and privilege of serving as Lead File Reviewer and Chair of the Black Candidate Application Pathway's Selection Committee, in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team of health care professionals, scientists, educators, and patients, among others, representing the Black community, both internal and external to McGill University. The inspiring results of the inaugural year of this pathway, with the enrolment of 21 Black students in the Class of 2026 and 2 Black students enrolled in the Med-P program (i.e., a 400 percent increase compared to the previous record, and over 700 percent increase compared to the average annual cohort of Black students enrolled at McGill's School of Medicine historically), is a testament to the commitment of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences' and its Social Accountability and Community Engagement Office's leadership, including Dean and Vice-Principal (Health Affairs), Dr. David Eidelman, former SACE Director, Professor Saleem Razack, as well as student leaders, such as Dr. Victoire Kpade, MDCM'2022 (a mentee), other student volunteers who serve as peer mentors in SACE's Community of Support Office, and contributions of various members of the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus and Black alumni.*

*In addition, the Faculty of Dental Medicine and Oral Health Sciences' Black Candidate Pathway (BCP) was developed last year and has been implemented for the current admission cycle, in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences' BCP.*

*Implementation of the ABR Plan is helping to forge new collaborations through effective community outreach. As an example, this summer, after being contacted by Dr. Nana Graves, Vice-President of the Quebec Black Medical Association (QBMA) in an ongoing effort to dismantle financial barriers to health professional training for Black students, I reached out to the Provost's Office for guidance regarding proper protocol to facilitate McGill's participation in this worthy objective. The timely, generous response of the Provost's Office, including Co-Acting Provost and Associate Provost - Equity and Academic Policies, Professor Angela Campbell, the Provost's Academic Lead on the McGill Anti-Black Racism Plan, Professor Terri Givens, and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and Vice-Principal (Health Affairs), Dr. David Eidelman, was exemplary.*

*These collaborative efforts resulted in the awarding of McGill-funded scholarships to several Black students currently pursuing University or CEGEP studies during the QBMA's 50th anniversary Gala, hosted at The University of Montreal on Friday, October 21, 2022, continuing its mission of betterment of health outcomes for Black communities through education and research. It was humbling to join the McGill delegation, including Ms. Kate Hooton, Director of Admissions, Dr. Nicolas Cadet of the Cadet Foundation, Mr. Antoine-Samuel Mauffette Alavo, Black Student Affairs Liaison and members of the MDCM Class of 2026, to celebrate academic excellence and community engagement, with the goal of honouring, inspiring, strengthening the pipeline of Black*



**Dr. Anita-Brown Johnson**  
**Assistant Professor of Family Medicine**  
**Associate Member, Division of Geriatrics and Faculty of**  
**Dentistry, McGill University**  
**Chief of Family Medicine and Director, Secondary Care**  
**Division, MUHC**  
**(Photo Credit: Owen Egan)**



health professionals to help reduce health disparities among Black and other historically marginalized communities.

*Through such initiatives, and with the support of the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus, Black students, alumni, and allies, the time is ripe, more so than ever, for McGill to build meaningful interdisciplinary collaborations and community engagement across Departments, Schools, and Institutes within its campuses and beyond, as we strive to create a better, more equitable future for all.*

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### **3/ Student Leadership Program**

#### **COMMITMENT**

Develop 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.

McGill students selected to take part in this Program will receive an honorarium/stipend and leadership training focused on: effective communication, setting and reaching goals, overcoming adversity, empathy, and empowerment.

#### **ACTION UPDATE**

- During the reference year, the promising Pick Your Path for Black Youth (PYP) program was created. PYP is a paid mentorship experience for Black high school students in grades 10 and 11. The program is designed to introduce Black youth to various areas of study and equip them with tools to make informed and empowered decisions about their educational path. High school students are paired with a Black McGill student or alumni mentor. Throughout, participants learn about various areas of study through workshops conducted by students, professors, and/or professionals within the Montreal and McGill Black communities. Students also work with their mentor on a project of their choice that aims to answer the guiding question, "What are my next steps in my path of education?" PYP includes monthly information sessions for parents/guardians about navigating university and how to support their youth in their educational paths.
- In PYP's first year, 12 students and parents were successfully paired with 12 mentees. The response from prospective mentors was extremely enthusiastic, which holds promise for the program's sustainability and growth.
- Feedback received on PYP from mentees, mentees' parents, and mentors has been positive. This said, some administrative challenges were identified that will be corrected in the coming year of the program to ensure smoother operations.

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#### **Pick Your Path (PYP) Testimonials...**

*"I was able to get a better understanding of what I wanted to pursue with the help of my awesome mentor"*

*“[What I liked the most was] the sense of comfort. Being able to freely express my thoughts and concerns all while gaining the utmost knowledge.”*

See more video testimonials [here](#).

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- Next steps and projections for PYP
  - The mentoring program will be expanding to CEGEP students, with an overall growth to 25 mentees in 2022–23.
  - A special stream of the program will be offered in collaboration with the Desautels Faculty of Management.
- **Black Student Resource Guide:** This is an accessible and comprehensive resource to support newly admitted students at McGill. It includes information for students on wellness, academic success, and Black student associations.
- **Black Culture Fair:** This event, planned during the reference year, will take place in 2022–23. It will unite community members, students, and professionals of the Montreal Black communities for a full day of knowledge-sharing and networking. Its goals are to create a stronger relationship between McGill and Montreal Black communities and support Black-owned businesses/services.

## 4/ Online Learning Module on Systemic Racism

### COMMITMENT

Develop an online learning module on systemic racism, modeled on the University's *It Takes All of Us* sexual violence learning program. This module will be mandatory for all members of the University community. It will aim to broaden and deepen our collective understanding of what systemic racism is, and how it can impact the experiences of racialized members of our communities.

### ACTION UPDATE

- The learning module is in progress. Content is nearly complete, with graphics and technical aspects being finalized in 2022–23, such that the module should launch by Spring 2023. A communications officer will soon be appointed with responsibility for social media, news media, graphic design, audiovisual content, and other multimedia to support the goals of the online module on systemic racism as a university-wide initiative.

## 5/ Enhance Capacity Within Teaching and Learning Services (TLS)

### COMMITMENT

Enhance capacity within Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) to support the development of inclusive pedagogies and curricular approaches that foster the learning and development of our diverse community and a sense of belonging for all students, without interfering with the freedom of individual instructors to determine the content of their courses. This will occur through facilitated

training and other resources for instructors and teaching assistants and through [SKILLS21](#) programming within TLS.

#### **ACTION UPDATE**

- The Senior Advisor: Equity and Anti-Racism and Teaching and Learning Service (TLS) held several workshops and consultations over the 2021–22 academic year, such as:
  - [Attending to Microaggressions](#): This session was offered three times, twice to professors and once to teaching assistants.
  - [Dealing with Microaggressions in the Classroom](#): A workshop for BIPOC students and their allies on navigating microaggressions in the classroom.
  - Instructor consultations: TLS led consultations with BIPOC instructors on equitable and anti-racist learning environments.
  - *Being Black at McGill*: During this five-part series, Black students shared their experiences to allow TLS to design services that will support their success.

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*McGill's Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism promotes increased scrutiny towards the varied experiences of Black students navigating academia. The Plan provides a means to realizing Black academic flourishing by pinpointing and redressing distinct contexts in which Black student success is inhibited. Camille Georges (McGill Black Community Outreach Associate) and Antoine-Samuel Mauffette Alavo (Black Student Affairs Liaison), in particular, met with me before my first semester at McGill and have consistently empowered my vision to develop resources and programs to increase access to tertiary education for Black youth. I am truly grateful to be a part of this process, and I look forward to our continued and future triumphs.*

**Elijah Aedo-Castillo U1**  
**Faculty of Arts**

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## THEME 2: RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE

### 1/ Expanded McGill History Project

#### COMMITMENT

Undertake an expanded McGill history project that will investigate McGill's connections with the transatlantic slave trade. The project will engage a research team led by one or more historians with the requisite expertise to carry out this work. While ensuring that the project team enjoys the full measure of independence and academic freedom in conducting its work, methods of engagement with the Black communities of McGill and Montreal will be established to ensure that the contemporary meaning of the history is well understood. The project will result in a public report setting out historic findings, which will inform further work to address anti-Black racism. This project will complement work currently pursued by McGill's [Provostial Research Scholars in Institutional Histories, Slavery, and Colonialism](#).

#### ACTION UPDATE

- McGill's two [Provostial Research Scholars in Institutional Histories, Slavery and Colonialism](#) have completed their research projects, which will contribute to developing a fuller study of McGill's past.
- [Dr. Melissa N. Shaw](#), who completed her [lauded Ph.D. thesis](#) at Queen's University, conducted archival work to assess how Blackness, Indigeneity, and whiteness informed McGill's development from the 1800s into the twentieth century. As a Provostial Research Scholar, Shaw worked alongside Professors Brian Lewis and Don Nerbas to co-organize the [McGill in History: Questions, Context, and Synthesis](#) colloquium. During a roundtable entitled "Methodological Faultlines and Opportunities in Black Slavery and Freedom Studies," she presented preliminary research on enslaved Black people in the McGill household. Working with Professors Lewis and Nerbas, she is currently compiling a collection of essays based on the colloquium. An essay that she authored will discuss some of her research findings thus far and offer reflections on the roundtable. Her initial research findings also were [published](#) through *Black Perspectives*, the award-winning blog of the African American Intellectual History Society (AAIHS). Dr. Shaw is now [an Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Classical Studies](#). [As an emerging scholar of Black Canadian/Black North American history](#), Shaw is deeply concerned with the role of historical contingency when dealing with weaponized racial identities.
- [Dr. Joana Joachim](#) earned her Ph.D. in the Department of [Art History and Communication Studies](#) and the [Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies](#) at McGill University. Dr. Joachim researched the lives led by the women enslaved in the James McGill household, an approach she hopes will deepen our knowledge of how Canadian slavery and Black-Indigenous relationships can serve towards anti-racist and decolonial work in contemporary society.
- Further discussions on a McGill institutional history project will resume following the appointment and installation of McGill's next Principal and Vice-Chancellor.

## 2/ USS Membership

### COMMITMENT

Become a member institution of the Universities Studying Slavery (*USS*) network. In so doing, McGill will join institutions from around the world committed to earnest and open studies of their past with a view to addressing contemporary inequities. Membership and engagement with the USS network will broaden McGill's networks with institutions undertaking these critical explorations, opening prospective research opportunities and partnerships.

### ACTION UPDATE

- McGill's membership to the USS has been accepted. This network provides our university with access to important initiatives, information, and opportunities in which McGill community members can take part.
- Professor Terri Givens, who is the Provost's Academic Lead and Advisor (PALA) on the Action Plan, is McGill's liaison to the USS network.
- Professor Givens will be McGill's representative at the USS Fall 2022 Conference: *Legacies of Slavery | Landscapes of Segregation*

## 3/ Provostial Visiting Fellowship

### COMMITMENT

Establish a Provostial Visiting Fellowship-in-Residence on Black Life and History. This initiative will welcome to McGill, each year, a leading Black scholar whose research focuses on Black life and the Black experience, whether historically or in contemporary society. Application and selection oversight will occur through a collaborative process that involves the Office of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic) and the Dr Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty Caucus. Fellows may be selected from any discipline and will be welcomed within the Faculty most closely related to their discipline for one or two academic terms. Fellows will give a keynote lecture during their time at the University.

### ACTION UPDATE

- Persistent pandemic conditions during the reference year complicated the recruitment of a visiting fellow. Energies were redirected to the McGill Third Century (M3C) Postdoctoral Fellowship program. Three such fellows have been named and joined McGill in September 2022. The M3C Fellows are conducting research directly in connection with addressing structural and direct racism and other forms of oppression in institutional contexts.
- In 2023-24, McGill will aim to welcome two Fellows: one each in the Fall and Winter terms. Recruitment will begin in Fall 2022. Eligible candidates will hold tenure-track, tenured, or equivalent positions at a college or university in any country.

## **4/ African and Black Canadian Studies Program:**

### **COMMITMENT**

Enhance support for our African Studies Program, notably through:

- Provision of an annual budget to fund guest speakers, workshops, and student-led activities
- Provision of an annual budget to Uhuru: The McGill Journal of African Studies
- Creation of a Working Group on African and Black Studies to explore options for the expansion of the Program's scope to include African diasporic/Black studies and to build its research capacity, including through the creation of associated graduate programs
- Support of research innovation and excellence in the domains of African and Black Studies in the context of federal and provincial research funding programs, including the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) and, where applicable, the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) Programs

### **ACTION UPDATE**

- The African and Black Studies Working Group, led by Professors Khalid Medani and Debra Thompson, conducted outreach to faculty (notably through the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus), staff, students, and other stakeholders, including alumni. The Working Group submitted a visionary report to the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic) in late Winter 2022. A committee will be struck in 2022–23 to oversee the implementation of recommendations set out within this report.
- The Black Student Affairs Liaison has been working with Professor Medani to help structure the African Studies student association's activities and journal for 2022–23. Feedback has been gathered from recent graduates of the program to help guide this structuring.

## THEME 3: OUTREACH

### 1/ Scholarships and Student Aid:

#### COMMITMENT

- Work, 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.
- Create a fund earmarked to support Faculty-level initiatives tied to recruitment, outreach, and engagement focused on widening demographic representation within McGill’s student body

#### ACTION UPDATE

- Shania Johnson (MA, Art History) was awarded the [Charles R. Drew Graduate Fellowship](#), named in honor of McGill alumnus Dr. Charles R. Drew (MDCM '33), the “Father of Blood Banking.”
- In alignment with the Action Plan, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) earmarked funding to support graduate students at both the Master’s and Ph.D. levels in excess of \$200,000.
- The [Audrea Golding Black Student Leadership Award](#), established in 2021 through the leadership of the Subcommittee on Racialized and Ethnic Persons, was awarded to two graduating students again in 2022.
- [30 Mastercard Foundation Scholars](#) were admitted to McGill during 2021–2022 academic year.
- The Biology Department offered four summer research awards to Black BSc or BA&Sc undergraduate students. These were full-time, 15-week awards that allowed Black students to work in a lab or field setting to conduct hands-on research under the supervision of McGill Biology professors.
- The AES Black Students Undergraduate Summer Research Award provides support to two undergraduate students who self-identify as Black students in the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. The professor supervising the research project also contributes funding towards the total award.
- IBRO Summer Studentship Program for Black Undergraduate Students: In collaboration with the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO), the Brain Repair and Integrative Neuroscience (BRaIN) Program of the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre (RI-MUHC) offered summer research opportunities in neuroscience for four Black undergraduate students. Four paid positions in the summer of 2022 provided a unique opportunity to receive research experience in a top neuroscience laboratory. Each student was paired with a faculty mentor and specific research laboratory over a 12-week period.
- A fund established to support Faculty-based efforts tied to the Action Plan’s commitments translates to \$25K/an over five years to support local initiatives tied to recruitment, outreach, and engagement. Several Faculties drew on this funding to establish experiential learning opportunities for Black students. [Arts](#), for example, established eight summer internship awards to Black students through this allocation. Other examples from FAES and Science are



cited above. Law established the [Frederick Phillips Summer Program](#) to introduce Black youth in Montreal to various dimensions of legal education and our legal systems.

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*Last summer, I had the opportunity to be part of an amazing team and do research alongside epidemiologists in my Summer Studentship Program. The internship was put together and funded by the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO). For the internship, I worked with Dr. Christina Wolfson and her team on Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). I focused on initiatives/approaches to monitor ALS in Canada and globally, as well as investigated the epidemiological data (prevalence, incidence, and mortality) of ALS. Despite how intense that might sound, my principal investigator (PI) made an elaborate plan for me to follow throughout the summer which helped me stay on track, and I had regular check ins with her to present my findings. In addition, my schedule was very flexible because my lab operated on a hybrid format. I must say I enjoyed every single moment in my lab and learned so much from the experience, especially from all the guidance and support that I got from the people I met at the lab. I would recommend this internship opportunity to anyone who is interested in research and chronic diseases.*

**Boris Atabe**  
**U3 Pharmacology student & Summer Neuroscience Intern**  
**President, McGill African Students' Society (MASS)**

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## **2/ McGill Black Alumni Association (MBAA)**

### **COMMITMENT**

Support the McGill Black Alumni Association, through a fixed annual budget, to develop a mentorship program for Black students that would allow the MBAA to:

- Develop and maintain its website
- Host events centred on mentorship that match current students and alumni
- Support events for Black alumni, especially during Homecoming celebrations

### **ACTION UPDATE**

- In its second iteration, the McGill Black Mentorship Program (MBMP), an 8-month initiative by the McGill Black Alumni Association (MBAA) in partnership with the McGill Alumni Association (MAA), and McGill's Subcommittee on Racialized and Ethnic Persons (SCREP), provided Black students with the opportunity to explore their academic, personal, and professional goals with the guidance and support of Black alumni, faculty, and staff who shared their experiences, knowledge, and advice. Toolkits and FAQs outlining the program's goals suggested discussion topics, and participants' responsibilities were provided as were invitations to relevant career-related events. The following data are illustrative:

- 125 mentorship pairings
- 93% of participants reported that the program met or exceeded their expectations
- 92% of participants reported that they are very satisfied with the personal and professional guidance they received
- Mentee career interests ranged from public health, to finance, to food science

- There was wide representation across Faculties, with 26% of mentees from Arts, 15% from Medicine, 11% from Education, 11% from Continuing Studies, 9% from Management, 8% from Science, 8% from Law, 5% from Agriculture and Environmental Science, 4% from Engineering, and 3% from Music
- Thanks to funding support, the MBAA held five events throughout the year for Black students and alumni, ranging from financial planning to career networking to an industry insights recruitment event, as well as the 2021 Homecoming event, “The Politics of Memory: Commemoration as a Form of Resistance.”
- MBAA mentorship programs received recognition from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, a Grand Gold Award in the [Circle of Excellence Program](#).
- Launched in 2021 in support of the MasterCard Foundation (MCF) Scholars and Transitions Program, members of the McGill African Network have participated in career panels and lectures to open doors to MCF Scholars for diverse career opportunities. A mentorship program is in development and is slated to launch in 2023.
- The ABR working group and the MBAA collaborated on outreach and BHM 2022 planning.

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*I am very proud that McGill University has taken a proactive approach to address Anti-Black Racism issues on its campus. These are concerns that affects not only students and faculty but as well as the University's administration. We are looking forward to McGill University taking all the necessary actions so the progress will continue, and actions will turn into behaviours. It is great start!*

**Brian Smith**  
**Community member**  
**Member of the Advisory Panel on Black Student Life**

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### **3/ Advisory Panel on Black Student Life**

#### **COMMITMENT**

Create an Advisory Panel on Black Student Life, with a mandate to advise on decision-making with university leadership on key areas affecting Black students at McGill, including community outreach and support. Membership will include Black faculty, students, and staff, as well as representation from the McGill Black Alumni Association and the Black anglophone and francophone communities of Montreal and Quebec.

#### **ACTION UPDATE**

- Members of this Panel were selected based on their experience and their roles within Montreal's Black communities and student associations. The Panel met three times. Meetings focused on orientation, analyzing the challenges of Black communities both generally and in higher education, and developing recommendations for concrete actions to advance Black communities in Montreal and at McGill. The Panel's report on Year 1 will be presented to McGill's senior leadership in Fall 2022.

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*What a great idea from the McGill Anti-Black Racism Action Plan team to create a panel with a diverse group of people to address and validate the needs of black students on McGill campuses. It was an opportunity to continue the dialogue about their reality. Factors that help facilitate the creation of a safe and enjoyable campus experience for Black students were brought to the forefront (equity, representation, wellness, mental health, and support among others). The panel reinforces actively working on those issues so that Black students can reach their goals and fulfill their ambitions to become productive citizens of their community and society.*

**Michael Obas Romain, Ph.D.**  
**Community and Social Innovation Consultant**  
**Clinical Psychologist**  
**Member of the Advisory Panel on Black Student Life**

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## **4/ Partnership and Exchange Opportunities**

### **COMMITMENT**

Explore partnership and exchange opportunities with:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
- Institutions of higher education in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), notably the University of the West Indies (UWI)
- Institutions of higher education in Africa

### **ACTION UPDATE**

- McGill has established a partnership with the University of West Indies (UWI) that will allow for expansion of current collaborative McGill-UWI projects and the development of new opportunities. As McGill's only Caribbean exchange partner, UWI has welcomed McGill students since 2011. The program will contribute to developing a community of young, engaged leaders and to advancing policy, practice, and research to confront the pressing challenges of climate change. The project involves sending twenty McGill students to UWI to carry out three-month internships, as well as receiving twenty UWI students at McGill as Graduate Research Trainees for three-month periods
- As the University of Glasgow already partners with UWI, McGill also has initiated communications to explore possibilities for tripartite agreements.
- Communications continued with Howard University, notably by exploring collaborations between McGill's and Howard's Schools of Social Work. Colleagues from the two Schools are exploring initiatives across institutions that could allow students in both institutions to experience joint teaching and learning opportunities.
- The [BE-STEMM Conference](#) Faculty Networking Session was held on February 1<sup>st</sup>, sponsored by McGill and led by Dr. Loydie Majewska, who is also a Convenor of the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Staff and Faculty Caucus. Over 1500 participants registered. This initiative,

although not directly referenced in the Action Plan, holds promise for establishing networks and partnerships that will support and promote Black research excellence in STEMM fields.

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*In September 2020, as result of a series of consultations with the Dr Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus, the Principal and Vice Provost of McGill University mandated the creation of the Working Group on African and Black Studies as part of the Anti-Black Racism Plan. As a member of the ABSWG, and with the full endorsement of the Caucus, I was excited to share our vision for the expansion of African/Black studies at McGill. When combined with the successful recruitment, and hopefully retention of additional Black Faculty and Staff at McGill, I believe that the ABR provides an opportunity to change the landscape and environment at McGill. I am eagerly awaiting the response to our Plan.*

**Dr. Loydie Majewska**  
**Department is Pediatrics, Human Genetics, and Anatomy and Cell Biology (FMHS)**  
**Winner of the 2022 McGill Award for Equity & Community Building**

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## THEME 4: WORKFORCE

### 1/ Black Tenure-Track and Tenured Professors

#### COMMITMENT

Increase the complement of Black tenure-track and tenured professors. Currently [September 2020], 14 tenure track and tenured professors at the University self-identify as Black in McGill's employment equity survey. This represents 0.8% of our tenure-track and tenured academic staff.

While labour-market availability cannot be discerned specifically for Black populations (since census data for "visible minority/racialized" persons are not disaggregated), a hiring target can be set by relying on Canadian census data. As such, McGill will set a target of 85 Black tenure-track or tenured professors (5%) by 2032,\* with an interim target of at least 40 Black tenure-track and tenured professors by 2025. These colleagues will be recruited across disciplines and academic units.

#### ACTION UPDATE

- Currently, 31 tenure-track or tenured faculty members at McGill self-identify as Black.
- Strategic hiring initiatives remain under way to sustain this critical growth in Black faculty representation.

### 2/ Support for Black and Other Racialized Academic Staff

#### COMMITMENT

Support the well-being and success of Black and other racialized academic staff notably through:

- Extension of a budgetary commitment to the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty Caucus ("the Caucus")
- Semi-annual meetings between the Principal, Provost, and the Caucus
- Creation of a mentorship network open to all academic staff, with the expectation of a disproportionate benefit for members of underrepresented groups
- Ensuring that hiring units are aware of, and encouraged to deploy, the University's robust recruitment and retention protocols, including spousal appointment processes
- Analysis of demographic representation within salaried ranked Contract Academic Staff, accompanied by the setting of targets, measures, and timelines to address identified gaps

#### ACTION UPDATE

- The budget commitments to the Caucus were upheld to support its programming for Black faculty and staff at McGill.
- Welcome meetings and meet & greet events were held for Black faculty.
- A new mentoring and networking initiative will launch in Fall 2022 for junior Black faculty to support professional development, career progression, and community-building.

### **3/ Representation and Advancement of Black and Racialized Administrative Staff**

#### **COMMITMENT**

Work to increase the representation of, and career opportunities for, Black administrative and support staff, notably through:

- Setting population-based workforce targets for M-level and Executive staff. Black M-level and Executive staff currently represent 3.4% of that cohort at McGill. The following targets are set:
  - 5% representation by 2025
  - 6.8% representation by 2032
- Outreach with Black community groups and networks in hiring initiatives
- Training to enhance recruitment, interview, and selection practices
- Enhanced onboarding and mentoring for new hires
- Exploring mentoring and reverse mentoring/networking opportunities for students and staff with Black alumni and the larger Montreal community
- Delivering equity and anti-racism training for all HR professional staff, including HR Advisors, as well as senior management staff
- Review of policies and practices related to merit, retention, and promotion

#### **ACTION UPDATE**

- Boosted representation of Black administrative and support staff is reflected in the following hiring data for the reference year:
  - Total number of staff hired who self-identify as Black: 8.1%
  - Total MPEX employees hired who self-identify as Black: 5.5%
  - Total MUNACA employees hired who self-identify as Black: 10.7%
- The HR Anti-Black Racism Working Group created in 2021 continued to support Black staff. This Working Group has presented its initiatives at various Faculty meetings and at HR Advisors and Direct Service Representatives meetings. The Working Group also had a booth at the McGill Staff and Faculty Virtual Health Fair.
- The HR Anti-Black Racism Working Group worked to increase recruitment and retention of Black administrative and support staff:
  - Outreach to 29 Black Associations in the Montreal area offering employment services.
  - Training on the equivalency class protocol in recruitment to HR Advisors and Direct Service Representatives (95 registrants).
  - Testimonials of Black staff included on McGill's career website.
  - Review of McGill's onboarding website to foster a greater sense of belonging among Black and racialized staff as they join the organization.
  - Initial development of an optional orientation/onboarding buddy program to support newly hired Black administrative staff.
  - Internal Internship Pilot Program (IIP) for Black staff launched in February 2022.
  - Development of a workshop for HR on understanding anti-Black racism.

- “Anti-Black Racism Training for HR Professionals” piloted with HR Employment Equity Community of Practice (33 participants), thereafter offered twice more (68 participants).
- Jay Hewlin of [The Hewlin Group Inc.](#) facilitated a negotiations workshop organized by the Dr. Melville Black Caucus and the Black Staff Employee Resource Group. The session addressed negotiation preparation and negotiation strategy. Participants engaged in an experiential learning process and discussed various topics such as: the analytics of negotiations; bias in negotiations; strategies on how to navigate biases; and how negotiation strategies can be used to facilitate improved day-to-day interactions in the workplace.

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*[F]or me, the success of the [Internal Internship Pilot] Program is measured at each milestone (...) from onboarding, to the quality of working relationship developed with the buddy and the host; the openness to share knowledge and know-how; the trust built during job shadowing and throughout the course of the internship; the ongoing support from the home supervisor through check-in points and time release to allow the interns to learn and develop; the mentoring and bond which could take place during the internship and beyond; the interns’ contribution to the improvement of processes within their home unit, and in return, their contribution of time and service to the host unit while applying the new knowledge and competencies learnt and, finally, the evaluation, one year after the end of the internship, of the progress of the interns in their career development. My golden wish is that the success of this program will promote access to the program for a greater number of employees from diverse backgrounds.*



**Sandrine Hoindo-Donkpegan**  
Finance & Administration Officer, TLS

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## 4/ Equity and Anti-Racism Training for Search and Advisory Committees

### COMMITMENT

Develop more robust equity and anti-racism training and capacity-building for search and advisory committees for the appointments of the University’s senior-most positions. The intention will be to cast wide nets, worldwide, as part of all executive searches to yield candidate pools consistently characterized by excellence and diversity. The ultimate aim is to build diversity, including racial diversity, within McGill’s senior leadership.

### ACTION UPDATE

- Enhanced equity training for all senior leadership advisory committees continued.
- Proactive recruitment and strong employment equity protocols are in place in senior leadership searches, as they are for recruitment more generally across the University, with a view to upholding our commitment to inclusive excellence.



## THEME 5: PHYSICAL SPACE

### 1/ Campus Planning Working Group on Recognition and Commemoration

#### COMMITMENT

Establish a Campus Planning Working Group on Recognition and Commemoration. This Working Group will be mandated to examine issues of representation in the execution of the McGill Master Plan, particularly with reference to Black and Indigenous presence on campus.

#### ACTION UPDATE

- Terms of reference for this Working Group are in development with an expectation that they will be presented in 2022-23.

### 2/ James McGill Statue

#### COMMITMENT

- Install, for the time being, a plaque next to the James McGill statue on lower campus, which explains who James McGill was, including his connections to, and involvement with, the transatlantic slave trade and his ownership of enslaved peoples.
- Assess and determine the statue's most suitable setting – including its location and necessary contextualizing information – as McGill enters its third century.

#### ACTION UPDATE

- The history of James McGill presented through university channels was rewritten to provide a wider breadth of information regarding his complex history, including his ownership of enslaved persons within his household and his participation in the transatlantic slave trade. This history has been shared on McGill's [website](#). It was also set out on a plaque that was installed next to the sculpture of James McGill on lower campus.
- In July 2021, after the sculpture was vandalized, it was removed from its site. As explained in a public communication to the McGill community, the decision as to whether it will be returned to its prior location or situated elsewhere is under consideration. For the moment, the sculpture remains in storage.

### 3/ Bellairs Research Institute

#### COMMITMENT

Convene a working group to explore and make proposals that would draw on the [Bellairs Research Institute](#) as a site to further research and learning in connection with topics such as: Barbadian-Canadian relations, Caribbean studies, slavery studies, post-imperial studies, sustainability studies, and the blue economy.

## ACTION UPDATE

- Preliminary meetings with key stakeholders at McGill have taken place to determine how best to move forward with respect to the Bellairs Research Institute in a manner that preserves its important academic activities while advancing commitments made in the Action Plan. A formal working group is expected to be struck in 2022–23.

## 4/ Living Website

### COMMITMENT

Create a living website modelled on *Blazing Trails: McGill's Women* to showcase the presence and success of Black McGillians over time.

### ACTION UPDATE

- McGill has committed to highlighting the history and contemporary presence of diverse peoples within our campuses through multiple sites and modes of communication. This began with the Bicentennial website. See: <https://200.mcgill.ca/history>.
- As part of the University's Bicentennial celebrations, the McGill Visual Arts Collection featured [women's contributions to Montreal's vibrant musical scene](#), among them Black pioneers Violet Grant States and Daisy Peterson Sweeney.
- McGill is taking initial steps to create a living website highlighting the contributions made by Black McGillians to the University and to society. Building off the University's [Bicentennial website](#), a dozen vignettes initially will be featured on the site. The site will continue to grow as more stories are added.
- The Anti-Black Racism [website](#) was officially launched in English and French to highlight the contributions of Black McGillians as well as institutional progress on the McGill ABR Strategy.

## 5/ Black Student Space

### COMMITMENT

Consolidate and enhance University resources dedicated to antiracism education, support for racialized members of the McGill community, community outreach, and response to incidents of racial discrimination. The University administration and members of the McGill community will together determine the structure and mandate of a unit dedicated to such anti-racism initiatives.

### ACTION UPDATE

- The space has been renovated and furnished and is on the cusp of its formal opening. It will provide a site for students to gather and for Black students' associations to hold their weekly meetings. Some student associations have already begun to use the space in this manner.
- Members of the ABR Working Group will hold regular meetings in the space to greet and work with students.



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## Looking Ahead

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Thank you for reading this annual report on the second year of activities carried out pursuant to the Action Plan. As we have said since the inception of this Action Plan, our work to address anti-Black racism will always be iterative and ongoing. Although this Report sets out some important progress, the road to challenging and overcoming anti-Black racism remains long. Traveling that road will require sustained effort and perseverance and calls for each of us to engage in critical self-reflection and action.

In Year 3 of the Action Plan's implementation, we will work to sustain the measures taken in the first two years since the Plan's establishment while also focusing on the following areas:

1. strengthening communication channels between McGill's administration and Black student communities;
2. strengthening support for Black students including through the appointment of at least one dedicated Local Wellness Advisor;
3. welcoming, supporting, and retaining Black faculty while sustaining ambitious initiatives focused on the recruitment of outstanding Black academic talent;
4. enhancing efforts to recruit, retain, and support the professional success of Black staff;
5. initiating the implementation of recommendations within the Final Report of the Working Group on African and Black Studies;
6. strengthening, in partnership with McGill's Global Engagement Office, academic partnerships and research opportunities with Caribbean institutions, including UWI;
7. launching McGill's online module on systemic racism; and
8. implementing the recommendations in the forthcoming report of the *Advisory Panel on Black Student Life*.

Please be on the lookout for invitations to share your voices and views on these efforts over the months ahead.

The final word of this report is one of recognition and thanks to all who have been working to address anti-Black racism at McGill and striving to make our campuses more equitable and inclusive for all.

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## Appendix

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McGill University acknowledges and appreciates the important contributions of the [Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus](#), whose Statements are reproduced here:

### **CAUCUS 2021 STATEMENT AGREED BY CAUCUS ON AUGUST 25, 2021, PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2021**

In keeping with our Mandate, the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus continues to be committed to cultivating a nurturing environment for, and advocating on behalf of, Black faculty, staff and by extension students, at McGill University. In that capacity, we issue the following statements with regard to recent developments.

#### **Meaningful Consultation**

We wish to underscore that the effectiveness of McGill's commitment to redress anti-Black racism depends on meaningful consultation and sustained dialogue with members of our Caucus, recognized Black student groups, the McGill Black Alumni Association, and broader Black communities. In particular, active, open-hearted listening to our communities is indispensable to any serious effort to undo systemic racism. Initiatives developed without good faith consultation and collaboration undermine the objective of addressing anti-Black racism, as they exclude and otherwise silence the very communities they purport to serve. Since its inception, the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus has fostered a mutually beneficial relationship with the University's administration as it implements initiatives related to Black faculty and staff.

We expect the University's administration, including the Provost's Office where most equity initiatives are now housed, to demonstrate its good faith, by nourishing the relationship with the Caucus necessary to redressing anti-Black racism.

More broadly, we ask all McGill units to respect the fact that no individual member speaks for the Caucus unless that person has been expressly appointed by the Caucus to do so. The presence of a Caucus member at a meeting, on a committee, or at an event does not constitute consultation with the Caucus.

#### **Mentorship and Conflict of Interest, and the PALA-ABR role**

The Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus notes the responsibilities of the Provost's Academic Lead and Advisor on McGill's Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism (PALA-ABR) as laid out in the McGill Reporter on June 30, 2021 and an email message from Provost Manfredi on August 25, 2021. According to these documents, the newly-arrived PALA-ABR is appointed to the Provost's office with responsibilities that include "advising academic leaders (Deans, Chairs, Directors, Associate Deans) about the distinct needs and experiences of Black faculty and measures that can facilitate an equitable and inclusive environment for BIPOC faculty" and "serving as a mentor to Black faculty at all ranks."

The Caucus expects that it should be meaningfully consulted, on an ongoing basis, on the nature of the responsibilities of the PALA-ABR, to articulate whether and how the new position as it develops might meet needs actually identified by our membership

Additionally, the Provost's office oversees most stages of an academic's academic trajectory and takes crucial decisions regarding colleagues' tenure, promotion and retention. It currently assumes final decision-making responsibility in complaints procedures notably on harassment and discrimination. The Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus has received expressions of concern, which it shares, that the PALA-ABR's responsibility on mentorship creates a conflict of interest (whether apparent or real). The

concern is compounded when newly recruited staff identified as Black are invited by the Provost's office to gatherings hosted by the PALA-ABR that they may reasonably consider to compel attendance.

In this regard, the Caucus acknowledges the establishment of the Provost's Faculty Mentorship Network, in which the mentors are at arm's length from the Provost's Office. At the same time, we are puzzled that the mentors in this program, described on the program website as "outstanding teachers and researchers who have experience as institutional leaders at McGill" include few Black professors, and no members from the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus.

As expressed in our statements of August 1 and November 12, 2020, we call upon McGill to re-assign oversight of the Action Plan and its efforts to address anti-Black racism outside of the Office of the Provost.

### **McGill History Project**

The McGill History Project is an attenuated response by the University to our Caucus's call for the University to convene a full-throated, official task force to examine McGill University's entanglements with slavery and its legacy in anti-Black racism, and cannot be framed in obfuscating terms. The Caucus's past participation in the consultations on the terms of reference for the McGill History Project, including the composition of its Scholarly Research Team, reflects the kind of engagement we expect. A community-rooted McGill History Project, carried out under the leadership of appropriately qualified Black faculty at McGill at arm's-length from McGill's administration, and with authority to issue recommendations for the future, remains a critical part of any reckoning with anti-Black racism during McGill's bicentenary and beyond.

The Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty & Staff Caucus is alarmed that in Principal Fortier's July 9, 2021 statement concerning damage to the sculpture of James McGill, James McGill's slaveholding of Indigenous and Black people was expressed in ambivalent terms such as "not so positive" and "complex." Moreover, the Caucus was taken aback that the McGill History Project was framed in this statement as, wholly or in part, for the purpose of deciding the future of the sculpture. Existing scholarship has already established that James McGill enslaved Indigenous and Black persons, and that Black and Indigenous members of the McGill community deem the statue a disturbing sanitization of that legacy and an ongoing affront to our humanity at both individual and collective levels. The University already has ample basis to make a decision to remove the statue from the main campus. A decision about the James McGill statue has never been the objective of the McGill History Project, which has much broader goals.

\* \* \*

### **Use of the N-Word in the Classroom**

December 9, 2020

The Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus stands in solidarity with Black faculty, students and staff at the University of Ottawa, and our fellow Caucus member Adelle Blackett, who has faced backlash for speaking up in solidarity. During a time when the world is on fire over the issues of racism, inequity, and lack of human dignity, it is critical to **refuse to allow academic freedom to become a red herring**. The n-word is not simply a racial epithet. It has a sordid history, because, for hundreds of years, anti-Black racists have used it as a fierce weapon to dehumanize Black people. We are people, and yet are often seen as objects to be excluded, diminished, ignored, and murdered. These historic and contemporary contexts confer to members of the Black community the ultimate say regarding when and where it is appropriate to fully state the n-word.

As part of the commitment to redressing anti-Black racism within post-secondary education including our own institution, it is imperative that we examine the academic spaces in which learning has traditionally occurred, especially regarding the use of the n-word. First, only Black people have the ultimate say where use of the n-word is concerned. Second, if the objective is to highlight the historical use of the word as an academic discussion point, then insistence by non-Black people to articulate the full word in the classroom, rather than the euphemism, becomes suspect. Abandoning our dignity and humanity should not be confused with preserving academic freedom. As noted by the Nobel Laureate, Toni Morrison, "Oppressive

language does more than represent violence; it is violence; does more than represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge.”<sup>1</sup>

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## RESPONSE TO MCGILL UNIVERSITY’S ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS ANTI-BLACK RACISM

November 12, 2020

The Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty and Staff Caucus is heartened to see that McGill University, through the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic), has developed and made public its Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism. Too often, statements that confirm the prevalence of anti-Black racism are empty words without deed, even as it is widely acknowledged that eradicating the systemic, entrenched anti-Black racism at McGill University and in Canadian society demands concrete, sustained, and targeted action. The issues raised below lead us to start the reflection on the implementation phase of the plan. The Caucus seeks assurance that it will be a partner in decision making, in addition to being part of the consultation with the Black community of the University. Given our shared commitments to creating favourable conditions for substantive change at McGill, we hope that the following issues will be addressed in the spirit of accountability and transparency:

1. The Action Plan details a commitment to “undertake an expanded McGill history project that will investigate McGill’s connections with the transatlantic slave trade” (p. 19). Our original Statement of August 1, 2020, requested that McGill strike a Task Force on Transatlantic Slavery and Colonialism. The formation of a university-level Task Force would guarantee the funding, administrative support, and gravitas necessary to fulfill this important mandate. One difference between task forces and research project teams is the assignment of authority and resources, i.e. personnel and materials needed to ensure the success of the task force. McGill’s connection to the transatlantic slave trade is not simply a matter of intellectual curiosity; it is the beginning of an investigation into the means by which we can achieve reparative justice. We seek to understand if the scope of the proposed ‘expanded history project’ would achieve the same outcome as a task force and if the findings would be similarly embraced by the University. It is therefore essential that the Caucus be involved in the design of the “expanded McGill history project”, including the drafting of its Terms of Reference.
2. The Action Plan provides targets for faculty and staff recruitment over the next twelve years (p. 31-33). We consider these commitments to be of the utmost importance, and as such we understand that these targets should be treated as the minimum number of faculty and staff McGill seeks to recruit, and in the short to medium term the university will work toward exceeding these targets. In order for these initiatives to be successful, and against a background of contrived explanations for the failure to hire Black faculty, however, McGill needs to address two key issues: the pipeline and retention. First, the development of a pool of Black faculty and staff to recruit from requires creativity. Cluster hiring should be considered, a practice that had been widely used by peer universities to address the diversity issue. In addition, models from the University of California and the University of Chicago, which fund post-doctoral fellowships in order to create this kind of pipeline, are excellent examples. Second, McGill must develop concrete mechanisms to retain Black faculty and staff. As outlined in our August 1 statement, this should include specifically designated funding for Research Chairs and spousal hires. With regard to the goal of increasing the number of Black non-academic staff, the University should explicitly commit to filling some of the positions at the senior, executive level. The Vice-Principal (Administration & Finance) must also engage all administrative units to meet the goals of the Plan. Specific plans for the professional development of Black non-academic staff should be spelled out. Without attention to these issues, any recruitment efforts will be significantly undermined, because our

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1993/morrison/lecture/>



new hires will probably leave McGill after a few years, leaving us in the same position in which we began.

3. The Action Plan proposes to establish a Working Group to explore possible expansion of the African Studies Program to include African diasporic/Black Studies. The Caucus acknowledges the recent invitation to participate in the Working Group, but, nevertheless, would like to ensure that its expertise is fully recognized both in the formation of the Working Group and in the drafting of the Terms of Reference.
4. The Action Plan recognizes that successful implementation depends on its acceptance at all levels of the University. It should therefore incorporate explicit steps to ensure that Deans, Directors, Chairs and other unit heads sign on to the vision and goals of the Plan.
5. The Action Plan (p.43) gives oversight responsibility to the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic). While this might be a convenient, short-term arrangement, the Caucus reaffirms its recommendation that responsibility for university-wide equity initiatives be vested in an office headed by a senior executive (e.g. a Vice-Principal), properly funded and staffed, with a great deal of autonomy, and reporting directly to the Principal. Among the responsibilities of such an office would be the development of mechanisms for handling complaints by faculty, staff and students about microaggressions and discrimination.
6. The Action Plan commits \$15 million over five years for implementation and identifies several measures for accountability and transparency. The Plan should demonstrate the feasibility of this commitment in relation to the hiring targets and other actions by providing a projection, however tentative, on how the money is expected to cover the costs. If the current Black faculty and staff are expected to assist in the implementation of the Plan, it would be appropriate that they be compensated (e.g. course release time, work-load adjustments, staffing reallocations, etc).

We look forward to continued cooperation with the administration to ensure that the Caucus plays a leadership role in the successful implementation of the Action Plan, ensuring that it truly contributes to building a better university and enhances its overall excellence.

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## **STATEMENT OF THE DR. KENNETH MELVILLE MCGILL BLACK FACULTY CAUCUS**

August 1, 2020

The Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty Caucus stands in solidarity with the recent anti- Black racism protests, which began in the United States after the Minneapolis police killed George Floyd while handcuffed in their custody. These protests have reverberated worldwide, illustrating the need to confront and uproot the stigmatizing scourge that is systemic anti-Black racism—an existential threat to all Black people.

In Canadian society, systemic anti-Black racism permeates our institutions, including academe. McGill University is on the eve of commemorating its Bicentennial in 2021. That commemoration is inextricably linked to James McGill's chattel enslavement of people of African and Indigenous descent at his Old Montreal residence and Burnside Estate, the property on which McGill University now stands. The Bicentennial is also profoundly connected to the profits that James McGill derived from goods that enslaved Africans produced on West Indian plantations.

A long overdue reckoning with anti-Black racism and the need for reparative justice is pivotal to honouring the humanity of Black people within academia and beyond. Our Caucus is heartened by Principal Fortier's and Provost Manfredi's respective statements on June 30th and July 3rd acknowledging the urgency and pressing importance of addressing anti-Black racism for McGill University, and committing both to build the



McGill Plan for Addressing Anti-Black Racism consultatively, and to allocate the resources necessary to realize its goals. We call on McGill University to take the following urgent, interdependent actions:

#### *Task Force on Transatlantic Slavery and Colonialism*

First, McGill must convene an official task force that will excavate its connections to transatlantic slavery and colonialism. Leading universities across the Black Atlantic and including Dalhousie in Canada have led the way in building high-profile, comprehensive, consultative, research-driven task forces with respected, community-rooted academics at the helm. The space was created for the academics involved to have the research time release necessary to produce work of the highest caliber, in the broad public interest. The task forces had resources to hire graduate or postdoctoral researchers, but the structure and reporting lines were distinct, seized upon the magnitude and gravity of the work undertaken, and built in accountability to the broader Black community. Those initiatives honour the courage and vision of the universities that have entrusted colleagues with this mandate. It is not too late for McGill to act decisively and consultatively, now, to commit to building a task force around the Provostial Postdoctoral Research Fellows on Slavery and Colonialism, which will affirm that equity is a key theme of McGill's Bicentennial (p. 7).

#### *Targets and Timetables for Recruitment of Black Faculty, Students and Staff, and Accompanying Support*

Second, McGill needs specific targets and timetables for the recruitment of Black faculty and students as it has rightly built for Indigenous colleagues, alongside targets and timetables for the recruitment of Black staff. Concerning faculty, the abysmally small current cohort of 10 self-identified Black tenured or tenure-track colleagues (out of approximately 1,700) illustrates the urgency with which McGill must recruit and retain excellent Black professors, and librarians. Representation should go beyond census numbers, to take into account the need to build a 'critical mass' of Black academics, able to respond to the disproportionate but crucial responsibilities that we assume for mentoring and community engagement within and beyond the University in keeping with McGill's mission statement. Recruitment and retention must include specific and careful attention to spousal hiring. Similarly, specific time-bound commitments are necessary for the hiring, retention, and promotion of Black managerial, administrative and support staff. There is a significant opportunity for McGill to undertake proactive community outreach-based recruitment measures in Montreal-area Black communities.

The specific time-bound commitments for the hiring of Black tenured and tenure-track colleagues need to be accompanied by targeted, supportive measures that apply throughout the academic lifecycles of our Black colleagues. McGill bears responsibility for equity throughout renewal, tenure and promotion processes. Our University should encourage supportive practice—including mentorship—and ensure accountability for equitable procedures and outcomes. McGill should also leverage the Canada Research Chair program and internal chair program to recruit and retain Black faculty. We reiterate the reflection of the McGill Working Group on Principles of Commemoration and Renaming that there is a significant opportunity to rename the internal professorships. Moreover, the messaging on EDI in McGill's recent CRC announcement considers racialized candidates to be over-represented. McGill's CRC announcement therefore prioritizes Indigenous applicants, as well as applicants with a disability, but not Black applicants. In the absence of disaggregated data, the deleterious effects of stereotypical assumptions are compounded, historical exclusions are replicated, while the exceptional under-representation of Black faculty is obscured. In other words, methodological problems arise when institutions do not pay specific attention to anti-Black racism and the Black experience. In keeping with international law alongside the momentum on disaggregation following the CRC program's equity addendum, we urge McGill to disaggregate data for Black faculty in the attribution of research chairs, while paying careful attention to the internal messaging to Deans and departmental Chairs.

The commitment to recruiting more Black students should take into account our University's integral connections to the city of Montreal, and its historic relationships to slavery here. Consequently, McGill must ensure inclusive outreach to various Black populations in Canada and beyond that include specific targets for the recruitment of students from the Black communities of the Greater Montreal Area. At present, students from these Montreal communities appear to constitute a very small percentage of the Black students at McGill, reflecting a historical pattern of student enrolment that has overlooked the Black

communities in closest proximity to the University. McGill should create an appropriately funded entity focused on Black access at McGill, with responsibility for outreach, recruitment, support and retention of Black students. This entity would build on and formalize the work that has to date been undertaken by organizations like the Black Student Network and the McGill Black Alumni Association, among others, to promote McGill to High School and CEGEP students. The entity would also establish collaborations with schools and community organizations that serve local Black communities to establish strong educational relationships with Black students in the Greater Montreal Area well in advance of the point at which they make decisions about attending university.

We are encouraged by the scholarly interest in the study of new frontiers of African and Black studies, including slavery as a global institution and its legacies, and the importance of relevant curricular offerings to the decisions students make about their studies. We call on McGill to increase support to the existing African Studies Program beyond its current focus on undergraduate teaching and facilitate its development and expansion as a centre of research, learning, and documentation as well as the study and teaching of Africa and the African Diaspora across the disciplines. This call is based on our shared premise that African Studies is a foundational field with a crucial role in focusing on—and providing support to—the lives and experiences of Africans and all peoples of African descent, that is, on Black life and anti-Black racism as it occurs in Canada and globally.

#### *Institutionalizing Equity and Representation across McGill and in Senior Administration*

And third, McGill must institutionalize equity with a specific focus on equity for Black persons within the institution. We call on McGill to create an Office dedicated to anti-racism. A Vice Principal—or another senior executive with University-wide responsibility—who shares our lived experience should oversee this Office, with a staff that includes other trained Black professionals who can recognize and support the unique experiences of Black faculty, students, and staff. Furthermore, the pursuit of equity must be manifest in the actions and diversification of the University's senior administration, and be sustained by practices of meaningful participation on the part of historically marginalized communities, including consultation with the Dr. Kenneth Melville McGill Black Faculty Caucus, in a range of decision-making processes.

These are trying times. But McGill has an opportunity to lead in confronting and uprooting anti-Black racism. Black excellence and perseverance alone in the face of unmitigated systemic anti-Black racism cannot ensure that Black faculty, staff and students will be treated equitably and with dignity. As we forge ahead in this U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent, McGill should cultivate a relationship in which members of the Black professoriate, alongside staff and students and alumni, are able to trust that substantively we are respected, valued members of the University community.