



**University  
of Manitoba**

Anti-Racism Task Force  
**Interim Recommendations**

November 9, 2022

In its Strategic Plan, the University of Manitoba committed to developing and publicizing a university-wide anti-racism strategy.<sup>1</sup> In support of this commitment, the Anti-Racism Task Force was assembled early in 2022 to develop recommendations to inform the Anti-Racism Strategy, and to identify immediate priorities to address racism within the various communities that comprise the University. This Interim Report reflects the progress of the Task Force during the first six months of their one-year mandate. Notably, it presents recommendations for immediate action based on the lived experiences of the Task-Force members and on the significant work already done by community members, stakeholder groups and key offices within the University.

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<sup>1</sup> OUR SHARED FUTURE, Building on our Strategic Plan

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# Addressing Racism at University of Manitoba

As with other institutions and systems that are inextricably linked to Canada's colonial legacy, the University of Manitoba has a history of overt and subtle expressions of racism and racial inequity manifested through policies, practices, and culture. The campus is home to the National Center for Truth and Reconciliation, and carries an obligation to carry reconciliation forward.

In 2018, racist posters were put up in multiple buildings of campus and an Indigenous faculty member was racially profiled by campus security. The following year, the NCTR tipi was vandalized. Indigenous faculty, students and elders held a series of meetings with administrators and campus leaders where they shared their experiences of racism. Following these meetings, former President Barnard acknowledged that the University was not doing enough to combat racism against Indigenous faculty staff and students on campus and made a commitment to doing more.<sup>2</sup> That year, the Provost's Indigenous Senior Leadership Advisory Committee conducted a process to review the role and mandate for Indigenous senior leadership at the University.

Racism within the University is not directed only to Indigenous students, staff and faculty. Racism has been experienced by other racialized communities including South Asian; Chinese; Black; Filipino; Latin American; Arab; Southeast Asian and others.<sup>3</sup> In 2020, the Final Report of the President's Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion indicated that "racism exists on campus and includes racist acts directed towards individuals and actions that reflect racist attitudes". Some consultation participants shared that racism was part of their everyday experience. We further recognise racism is not restricted to individual acts, and that racism is systemic.

## Driving Change

President Benarroch and former President Barnard have both spoken out publicly to denounce racism in all its forms and to re-affirm a collective commitment to anti-racism. In support of the University's commitment to eliminating all forms of racism, a framework to guide the process of developing an Anti-Racism Strategy for the University was developed. As a first step, the framework included the creation of an Anti-Racism Task Force to guide and contribute to the development of the Anti-Racism Strategy through an iterative and consultative process. The establishment of the Task Force supports the anti-racism pillar in Our Shared Future, the UM's interim Strategic Plan released in October 2021, and was accompanied by funding to support the development of an anti-racism strategy.

The Task Force recognizes and further builds on the significant work already done by community members, stakeholder groups and key offices within the University, including the Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous); the President's Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); the Office

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<sup>2</sup> Global News, Feb 8, 2019, [Clear that Indigenous students face racism at University of Manitoba, says President.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, May 17, 2022, [Portrait of the social, political and economic participation of racialized groups](#)

of EDI, the Rady Anti-Racism and EDI Offices, and many other offices, faculty, staff and students across the University working toward racial justice and equity.

## Structure

The twenty member Anti-Racism Task Force is cross-functional, with cross-level representation. Members were selected by the Vice-President (Administration) and the Vice-President (Indigenous). Consideration was given to candidates who have a proven interest and background in anti-racism and EDI. Further, consideration was given to maximizing the representation and the diversity of Indigenous, Black and racialized experiences within the Anti-Racism Task Force. The full list of Anti-Racism Task Force members can be found in Appendix A.

## Mandate

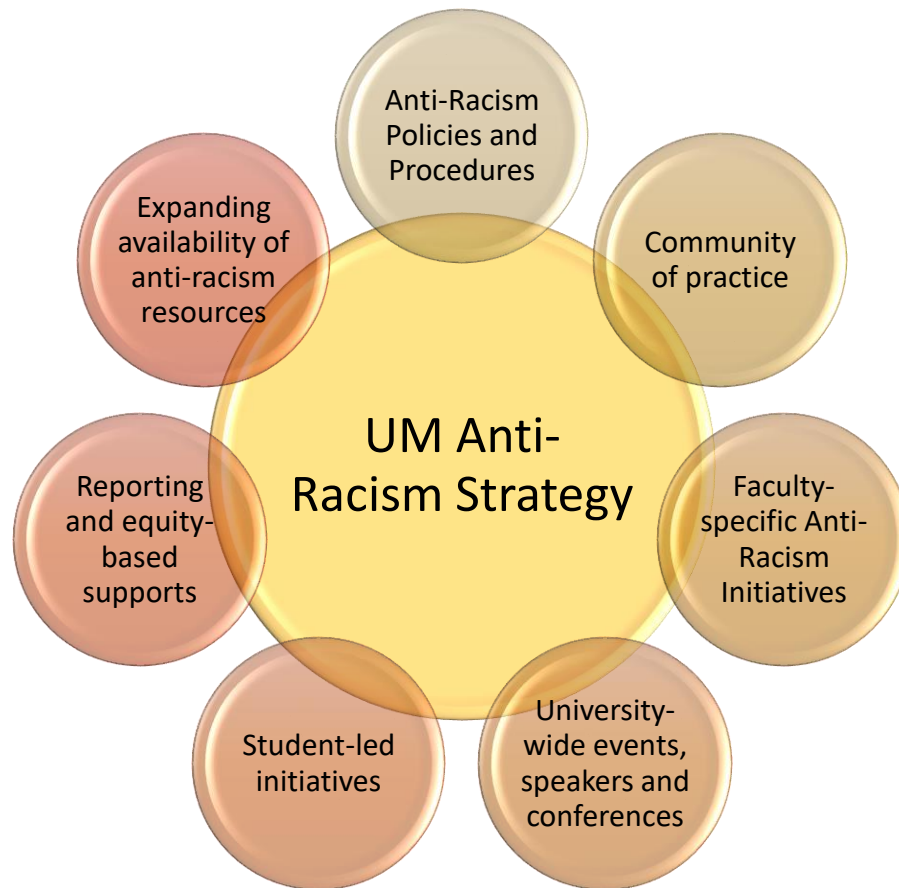
The mandate of the Anti-Racism Task Force is two-fold:

- Make recommendations to inform the Anti-Racism Strategy; and
- Identify immediate priorities to address racism at the University.

This report fulfils the second part of this mandate. The Task Force is expected to deliver its Final Report addressing recommendations for the Anti-Racism Strategy in Spring 2023.

## A Vision for the Anti-Racism Strategy

An Anti-Racism Strategy is needed to create a campus environment that is physically and psychologically safe as well as free of all forms of racism and discrimination. As a university-wide strategy, it must be comprehensive in scope going well beyond any one faculty, office, or policy. Dismantling systemic racism across all university systems through an integrated process can only be successful through adoption of a holistic approach that addresses inclusion of all students, faculty, staff and others.



Solutions must be co-created through a process that is consultative and collaborative, rather than top-down, while acknowledging and honouring the work of Elders and community leaders who have long been doing anti-racism work across campuses. The framework will further support and amplify those efforts and the offices that lead them. Each faculty should continue to have anti-racism conversations and to plan activities, supports, and policy reviews that seek to address their unique realities, needs, communities, and areas of professional practice. The Strategy will be a vehicle to allow these initiatives to communicate and coordinate with each other to realise university-wide impacts. The UM Anti-Racism Strategy will support the interconnectedness of anti-racism efforts ant the University – allowing them to function as an inter-connected whole rather than siloed, or worse, patch-work solutions to address a deeply entrenched systemic institutional problem.

The UM Anti-Racism Strategy must inform broader equity and anti-oppression work across the university, ensuring that racial justice is integral to efforts for social justice, while also recognizing the intersectional identities that make anti-oppression work so complex. Finally, the Strategy must ensure that different racisms are recognized and that we do not conflate the experiences and historical traumas of Indigenous, Black, and other racialized persons. At the same time, we must work in ways that recognise different racisms are intertwined, and that our actions and strategies must build understanding and solidarities if we are to dismantle all forms of racism.

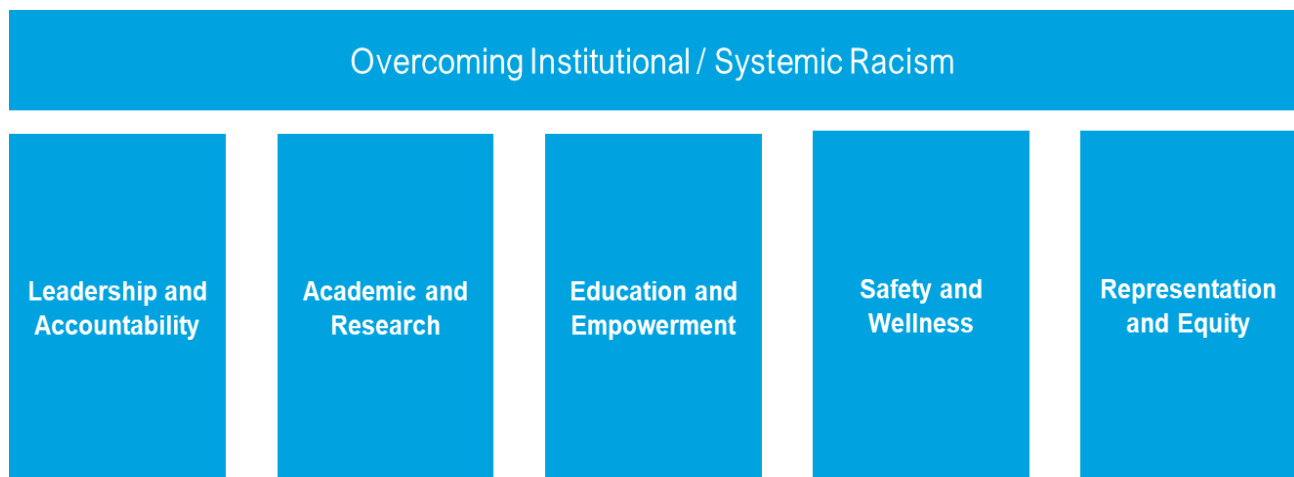
The Strategy will approach racism as a systemic problem:

*“Systemic racism is when the system itself is based upon and founded upon racist beliefs and philosophies and thinking and has put in place policies and practices that literally force even the non-racists to act in a racist way.”*

*Senator Murray Sinclair<sup>4</sup>*

In recent years, societal acknowledgement and understanding of what constitutes racism has shifted from solely individual, interpersonal actions to underlying social, procedural and legal structures of advantage and disadvantage; from perceiving racism as merely the application of stereotypes and individually-held prejudices, to racism as the cumulative impact of institutional, social, procedural and structural racial injustice. To address such a wide-reaching and deeply entrenched process, we need a system-wide approach and solutions, which the Anti-Racism Strategy will seek to drive at the University of Manitoba.

While systemic racism is the overarching theme, systemic racism exists in relationship with other manifestations, and consequently systemic change necessarily involves change among people as well. As such, other key themes, outlined in the figure below, have been identified by the Task Force as the basis for community engagement planned for the fall and winter of 2022.



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<sup>4</sup> Globe and Mail, June 10, 2020 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-systemic-racism-not-present-in-rcmp-commissioner-says-though-some/>

# Interim Recommendations to Address Racism at the University

The Anti-Racism Task Force’s mandate included identifying immediate priorities to address racism at the University. The Task Force members were selected based on their lived experience and expertise in the area of anti-racism. The experience of the group is both deep and diverse and their knowledge was brought to bear on the development of the seven priorities presented here.

These are foundational recommendations, and as such, they focus on education, policies and processes. They are not expected to result in an immediate change in behaviour, but to lay the groundwork for the process of dismantling racism in all its forms throughout the University of Manitoba community.

**1. The Task Force recommends that the University of Manitoba define measurable targets, develop clear accountability structures and provide dedicated resources to lead the implementation of these and future recommendations in a manner that supports transparency and accountability and ensures that intersectionality is considered.**

There is valid concern about the lack of meaningful action on the part of the University of Manitoba and universities generally to address racism. While consultations to identify specific gaps, areas of concern and interventions in the context of the University of Manitoba is a necessary first step, it is crucial that recommendations be implemented in a timely and accountable manner to effectively mitigate systemic inequities. Intermediate constructive measures are needed to establish confidence in the consultation process.

A 2021 article published by The Conversation Canada, of which University of Manitoba is a founding member, noted that: “University administrations have convened task forces over multiple decades, and each has issued a report recommending action. These recommendations are remarkably similar across time and institution. A consolidation of the findings of the anti-racism working groups of 10 Canadian universities indicates that the reports overlap almost entirely and have said largely the same things since the mid-1990s.”<sup>5</sup> Thus further consultation is often perceived by stakeholders as performative rather than meaningful in the absence of demonstrable change.

Not unlike this one, these Task Forces were largely comprised of racialized students, faculty and staff who dedicated significant time and effort with the expectation that they were contributing to driving change. The recommendations that they put forward were well considered and achievable. However, universities either failed to implement them, failed to identify clear accountability for them, or have since eliminated them, so that over two decades later, the same conversations are being had.

In October 2020, 54 Canadian universities, including the University of Manitoba, participated in a two-day national dialogue on anti-Black racism in academic spaces and strategies for breaking down barriers. This was the start of a year-long collaborative process that resulted in the *Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles*,

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<sup>5</sup> <https://theconversation.com/canadian-universities-10-years-of-anti-racist-reports-but-little-action-153033>



**Actions, and Accountabilities**<sup>6</sup>. The Charter aims to move from rhetoric to meaningful action in addressing anti-Black racism and promoting Black inclusion. It was endorsed by the University of Manitoba in January 2022. Building on this commitment, and on the action plan developed in response to the Indigenous Senior Leadership Report and Recommendations it is essential that the University of Manitoba provide dedicated resources and identify clear benchmarks for success to implement these and future recommendations in a manner that supports transparency and accountability inclusive of intersectional lived experiences.

Doing so in the short term prior to further rounds of consultation will build trust with constituent communities who experience the university as an inequitable space that provides limited safety. Identifying and implementing concrete steps will be key.

## **2. The Task Force recommends that University of Manitoba establish an overarching anti-racism policy.**

The Task Force recommends that the Board of Governors establish a policy to explicitly address anti-racism. This will serve to embed anti-racism as a priority, and will serve to hold governing bodies, faculty, staff and students accountable for creating and maintaining a safe, equitable environment for all members of the university community. This policy should:

- Promote work and learning environments that are equitable and diverse and free from all forms of racism.
- Provide a trauma-informed framework for provision of support to members of the university community who have experienced racism.
- Establish an integrated, transparent and streamlined process for responding to incidents of racism, including ensuring that those responsible are held accountable.
- Be situated within the Office of Human Rights and Conflict Management (OHRCM) as it should interact with the Respectful Work and Learning Environments (RWLE) and Sexual Violence Policy
- Report data on incidents related to incidents of racism within University's physical and virtual spaces in the OHRCM's annual report
- Reduce instances of racism on campus and in the community.
- Ensure that the University is compliant with relevant legislation.

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[https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/principal/sites/utsc.utoronto.ca.principal/files/docs/Scarborough\\_Charter\\_EN\\_Nov2022.pdf](https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/principal/sites/utsc.utoronto.ca.principal/files/docs/Scarborough_Charter_EN_Nov2022.pdf)

**3. The Task Force recommends that all University of Manitoba Board of Governors and Senate-approved policies and procedures be reviewed via Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIA) with an intersectional lens.**

The University is committed to monitoring and updating University policies and procedures to ensure that they remain effective and in line with other existing Policies and best practices, and formal policy reviews of all Board of Governors policies are mandated at regular intervals.

Current University of Manitoba policies were not developed with an anti-racism lens. To systematically identify and eradicate racism at the University, the policies that dictate operations must be reviewed for impact. The Task Force identified the Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) tool as a method to guide the review process.

A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. REIAs are used to minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. The REIA can be a vital tool for preventing institutional racism and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities.<sup>7</sup>

The Governing Documents Policy should be amended to require that all policy reviews include a REIA process, to be designed and implemented by a person with the necessary skills and experience. This must account for intersectionality by also considering, at a minimum, gender diversity, accessibility, anti-ableism, and Indigenous knowledges as part of the process. Through upcoming planned consultations, the Anti Racism Task-Force will identify criteria to establish if any policies or types of policies should be reviewed as priority.

A REIA assessment should also be required for all new policies developed going forward.

**4. The Task Force recommends that the University of Manitoba educate decision makers to inform the appropriate application of an anti-racism lens to internal decisions and processes.**

Decision makers should be responsible for completing education and ongoing learning to inform the appropriate application of an anti-racism lens to policy development, decision making and internal processes. This should include development of accompanying resources and a process to support accountability, transparency and build capacity.

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<sup>7</sup> Race Forward

**5. The Task Force recommends that the University of Manitoba adopt and provide common terminology to engage in anti-racism work at the University of Manitoba, and that this terminology be reviewed regularly to reflect community recommendations on evolving language in anti-racism work.**

The Anti-Racism Task Force has highlighted the importance of language throughout this process. The use of common terminology is not meant to be prescriptive, but rather supportive of critical thinking about the use of language. The use of a common lexicon can serve to enhance racial literacy, supporting efforts to effect change and meaningful dialogue about anti-racism at the University.

It is also essential to engage and support all academic programs in valuing anti-racism work and language as an integral part of their discipline, research activities, and culture.

The definition of terms will be made available on the Anti-Racism Task Force website. It should be circulated across the university community via a communication/educational campaign that engages and encourages all faculties and administrative offices to adapt and incorporate the definitions within their resources.

**6. The Task Force recommends that the University of Manitoba develop and implement a communication plan, beginning with a website dedicated to educating the university community and promoting the elimination of racism.**

The Anti-Racism Task Force recommends that the University develop and implement an engagement strategy to raise awareness, educate and build community around anti-racism. This should include a website, speakers, and a broader anti-racism campaign to be led by the Marketing Communications Office (MCO).

The Task Force collaborated with the Strategic Communications Initiatives team to develop an Anti-Racism Task Force website. The website is intended to share information about the Task Force and serve as a hub for information and support related to anti-racism in the university community and beyond, including reporting on progress towards these recommendations. The website will launch during the Fall term of 2022. The website is meant to be a living resource that the Task Force can continue to update and expand as this initiative progresses.

The Task Force is currently exploring options to embed a voluntary engagement component that allows faculty, staff and students to contribute to ongoing conversations on anti-racism.

The Task Force recommends that the University commit to maintaining this website after the Task Force has concluded its mandate. This will promote ongoing engagement on the part of the university community and will serve as an educational resource going forward.

**7. The Task Force recommends that the University of Manitoba establish a process to collect and distribute demographic data to identify and close diversity gaps.**

The President's Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion recommended that the University improve the collection of data on the diversity of students, staff, and faculty. It identified "the need to harmonize the collection of diversity data across students, staff, and faculty; review UM's data systems to ensure the ability for more robust collection and updating of baseline diversity data; develop a comprehensive, multi-pronged plan for increasing participation in self-declaration; and

develop a plan for ongoing analysis and reporting of diversity data.”<sup>8</sup> . The Anti-Racism Task Force is amplifying the requirement for data to establish baselines and to track progress towards increasing representation in the University community, including statistics such as the persistence and graduation rates of racialized students vs. non-racialized students, the advancement rates of academic and non-academic staff, and other key metrics.

The Task Force recommends developing a comprehensive strategy to collect and make available disaggregated demographic data to provide visibility and transparency, to inform decision making, and to drive change. This may include self-reported data collected through student applications and human resources systems, as well as student and employee censuses. When developing the appropriate data collection methodology and processes, the following should be considered:

- A data governance protocol should be established.
- There must be clear rationale for data collection and subsequent action must follow. The intended purpose of data collection and that it is permissible under the human rights legislation should be clearly communicated to the University community.
- Data collection must consider intersectionality, and as such should include not only representation of Indigenous, Black and Racialized Peoples but also persons with disabilities, all gender identities and gender expressions, and possibly other indicators such as age.
- There must be specialized and experienced trauma support available to every participant if this data collection has a consultation component.

The partnership between the University of Calgary’s Offices of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and of Institutional Analysis was highlighted as a best practice for data collection.

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<sup>8</sup> President’s Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Final Report. December 2020.

# Appendix A - Anti-Racism Task Force Members

Co-Chairs
<p><b>NAOMI ANDREW</b> (Co-Chair) - Vice-President (Administration)  <b>CATHERINE COOK</b> (Co-Chair) - Vice-President (Indigenous)</p>
University EDI Specialist
<b>TINA CHEN</b> - Distinguished Professor, Faculty of Arts; Executive Lead, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Office of the President
Students
<p><b>TEE-TEE APPAH</b> - Student, Faculty of Science, Vice-President of University of Manitoba Black Student Union  <b>REEM ELMAHI</b> - Student, Faculty of Science, President of University of Manitoba Black Student Union  <b>AMANDA FOWLER WOODS</b> - Graduate Student, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences  <b>RAVEN MORRISSEAU</b> - Student, Faculty of Arts; Indigenous Students' Association Rep  <b>AAKASH PAWAR</b> - Student, Faculty of Law  <b>SHYANTI SAHA ARPA</b> - Student, Asper School of Business</p>
Academic Members
<p><b>MARCIA ANDERSON</b> - Vice-Dean, Indigenous Health, Social Justice and Anti-Racism, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing  <b>LEONA HUNTINGHAWK</b> - Lecturer, Faculty of Social Work</p>
Staff Members
<p><b>DELIA DOUGLAS</b> - Director, Office of Anti-Racism, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences  <b>JANESCA KYDD</b> - General Counsel, Office of Legal Counsel  <b>KAREN SCHWARTZ</b> - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Research Grants Officer, Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)  <b>VALERIE WILLIAMS</b> - Director, Office EDI, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences</p>
Academic Administrators
<p><b>CARY MILLER</b> - Associate Vice-President Indigenous: Curriculum, Scholarship, and Research  <b>JITENDRA PALIWAL</b> - Associate Dean (Academic) and (Graduate Programs), Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences  <b>LALITHA RAMAN-WILMS</b> - Dean, College of Pharmacy, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences  <b>MICHAEL YELLOW BIRD</b> - Dean, Faculty of Social Work</p>
Alumni
<b>DUANE BROTHERS</b> - Board of Governors member, Alumni representative

## Appendix B - Milestones Related to Anti-Racism

This list, while not exhaustive, represents key milestones in Anti-Racism and EDI at the University of Manitoba. It does not capture the many important smaller scale and grassroots initiatives that are ongoing at the University.

2011	<b>University of Manitoba Statement of Apology and Reconciliation to Indian Residential School Survivor</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to document RFHS <a href="#">Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan</a>
2016	<b>Indigenous Education Blueprint</b>	
2016-2017	<b>Turtle Lodge Knowledge Keepers engagement and consultation with the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences (<a href="#">report</a>)</b>	18-month process involving University faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, Elders and Knowledge Keepers
2017	<b>RFHS EDI Committee struck</b>	<a href="#">TOR</a> and other related documents
Winter 2019	<b>A series of meetings between Indigenous students and elders, administrators and campus leaders to discuss racism at the University</b>	
Winter - Spring 2019	<b>Process to review the role and mandate for Indigenous senior leadership at the University, commissioned by the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).</b>	<a href="#">Link to report</a>
Summer 2019	<b>RFHS hires Anti-Racism Practice Lead, Dr. Delia Douglas; Anti-Racism Policy Working group is convened in the Fall.</b>	
Summer 2019	<b>University Indigenous Senior Leadership Report and Recommendation issued August 31, 2019</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to Report
Fall 2019	<b>Dr. Catherine Cook appointed as Vice-President (Indigenous)</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to announcement
Winter 2020	<b>President EDI Task Force struck; community consultations conducted, and report issued in December 2020.</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to Task Force website
Winter 2020	<b>Diversity push doubles the number of minorities studying education at the University</b>	
Winter 2020	<b>RFHS EDI Policy approved</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to policy
Spring 2020	<b>Hiring of the Vice-President (Indigenous)</b>	

Summer 2020	<b>OVPI Priority 4 Charter development: Supportive Environment for Indigenous Faculty, Students, Staff and Guests</b>	
Summer 2020	<b>Indigenous Advisory Council to the VPI established</b>	
Summer 2020	<b>Disruption of All Forms of Racism policy (RFHS) approved</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to policy
Fall 2020	<b>Dr. Michael Benarroch commits to development of an action plan to address racism</b>	
Fall 2020	<b>University of Manitoba participates in a two-day national dialogue on anti-Black racism, starting a year-long collaborative process that resulted in the <i>Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions, and Accountabilities</i>.</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to the Charter
Winter 2022	<b>Appointment of Tina Chen as Executive Lead (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to announcement
Winter 2022	<b>University of Manitoba formally endorses the Scarborough Charter</b>	
Winter 2022	<b>Anti- Racism Task Force convenes for the first time</b>	
Summer 2022	<b>Community Engaged Learning releases framework for working in good ways with Indigenous community partners</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> to website where the document can be downloaded
Fall 2022	<b>Anti- Racism Task Force releases Interim Report, including immediate priorities to address racism at the University,</b>	

