

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion
& Anti-Racism

ACTION REPORT

20
22

AND OUR PATH FORWARD



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Message from the president

We are a place of belonging for everyone.

To transform the role of this institution, NorQuest commits to equity first: in its teaching, learning, operations, and community outreach. At NorQuest College, our strength and our uniqueness come from who is included.

People—learners, instructors, staff, partners, and communities—increasingly choose us because they love that we are building a different kind of college. This is a place that listens, learns, and continually adapts to create belonging for everyone.

NorQuest began the work towards being a place that lives these values by first looking within the organization and recognizing that we could do better. Doing better will take work, but it is work that we are eager to take on. This work is prioritized because of what the college stands for.

Action began by bringing a powerful resource together: people. Supported by the Executive Team, NorQuest's staff created safe spaces within the organization then listened.

The result was capturing diverse voices within the NorQuest community, investing in resources, and moving forward. These three areas are featured in this report.

The report outlines Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and anti-racism efforts and achievements completed to date. It also reflects the college's path forward. The journey thus far has helped define NorQuest College's strategic plan: [NorQuest 2030: We are who we include](#). EDI and anti-oppression commitments are the cornerstones of the NorQuest 2030 strategy.

This is an ongoing journey, an expedition that requires lifting and climbing.

Throughout this journey, you—NorQuest staff, students, partners, and friends of the college—are invited to

**raise your voices,
share this vision, and
help along the way.**



Carolyn Campbell
President and CEO,
NorQuest College

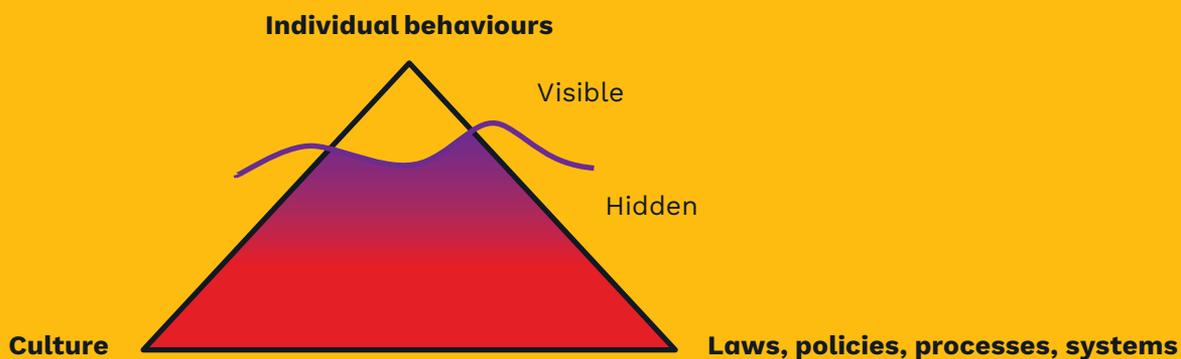
Process framework

Historically, EDI work at post-secondary institutions has focused on individual behaviours. While this has been effective in increasing individual knowledge, skills, and awareness, it does not address the inequities upheld by an organization's culture and systems.

The Lopes & Thomas Framework, which identifies individual behaviours, culture, and systems as three key areas for successfully

implementing EDI, has been critical to setting up NorQuest's current state. This framework was used to gather feedback from a diverse, representative, and comprehensive group of stakeholders. It will continue to be used to inform our next steps.

A framework for EDI work¹



¹ This framework is informed by Lopes, T., & Thomas, B. (2006). Dancing on live embers: Challenging racism in organizations.

Approach to EDI and anti-racism

NorQuest created spaces and places for diverse voices, including faculty, staff, and community, to learn about specific gaps and opportunities. Together, we paved our path forward.

This report provides a view of EDI and anti-racism activities, actions, and milestones over the last 15 months. It also sets a path for how to engage and empower people inside and outside of NorQuest to bring different voices together and demonstrate that this is a place that thrives on safety and belonging.

Creating a truly equitable organization is central to who we are, and this effort will result in meaningful impacts on the larger community. **We will become leaders in this work**, setting an example so we can create the kind of world we all want to live in.

EDI and anti-racism at NorQuest

Anti-racism and EDI share similar goals at NorQuest, but they are unique in their approaches. The work is focused on removing barriers and understanding the specific needs of the communities we serve. Furthermore, EDI and anti-racism are about creating a place of belonging where people can bring their whole selves to NorQuest and succeed in their roles.

NorQuest has a rich history of doing work in this space for the past 20 years. The work has evolved, and more recently, taken an integrated, institution-wide approach. Accomplishments over the last two years in the areas of EDI and anti-racism at NorQuest College have deeply informed our path forward. To create a true place of belonging, EDI and anti-racism must be fundamental to everything we do.

NorQuest 2030: We are who we include **commits the college to a bold vision: to become an inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonized organization at the personal and systemic level.** Although inclusion has always been central to NorQuest's identity, our enhanced focus on EDI and anti-racism must be experienced both within and outside the college doors. Aligning these values to the work we do beyond our campus will be central to how we connect NorQuest to the communities we hope to serve.



Definitions

Equity is about fairness, not sameness. It recognizes that there are different paths to achievement and each path requires unique inputs to achieve success.

Diversity is not created, but it does acknowledge the variety of difference already present in our society. Diversity encompasses the protected grounds found in human rights legislation (race, gender, religion, etc.), personal characteristics (personal habits, work experience, etc.), and organizational characteristics (work location, seniority, etc.).

Inclusion is the intentional act of recognizing and valuing diversity. It is the degree to which one perceives that they are a valued member of their work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies their needs for a sense of belonging and uniqueness.

Anti-racism is defined as the “active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, and attitudes—so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.”²



² These definitions were developed by input from the NorQuest community and informed by work such as the Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks, 2021, and Calgary Anti-Racism Education, 2020), and Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018

EDI in action

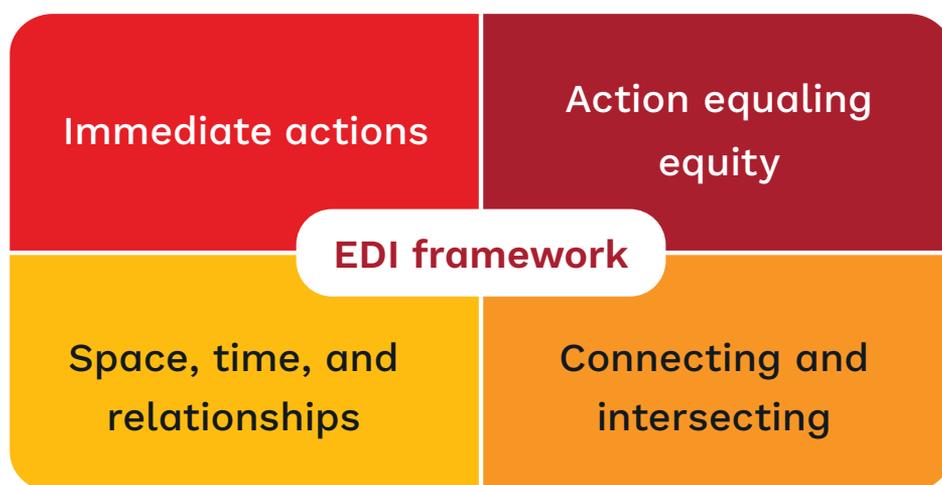
NorQuest has had a 20-year history of various work in EDI.

In 2020, NorQuest took its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) work to a new level. The Executive Team championed a college-wide approach for a stronger and deeper understanding of what EDI means at NorQuest. This approach was rooted in listening to NorQuest faculty, staff, and learners to identify what must be done to create meaningful, lasting change.



EDI framework

While NorQuest stakeholders supported the idea that the college needs to act on issues using an EDI lens, they advised that, for the work to succeed, those actions need to occur in the context of intentional, thoughtful, and equitable ways of working. As a result, NorQuest developed a four-quadrant EDI framework that places importance on what we will do and how we will succeed.



Immediate actions: This quadrant reflects what stakeholders identified as long-known issues that needed action and completion in 2021/22. Actions to address these issues were informed by leading EDI research and practice.

Connecting and intersecting: This quadrant drives understanding and alignment of EDI-related work at NorQuest. The goal is to foster innovation, identify synergies and gaps, and locate intersections of identity and oppression.

To better understand the environment in which this work is happening and elevate comprehension of the content and systems around EDI, NorQuest will prioritize the creation of an EDI asset map and the establishment of protocols around EDI work.

Action equaling equity: This quadrant focuses on long-term goals and was fundamentally informed by the Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB).

NorQuest’s goal is to attain a measure of five in the three foundation categories of the GDEIB: EDI vision, strategy, and business impact; leadership and accountability; and EDI structure and implementation. These benchmarks will assist NorQuest in identifying areas of administrative transformation.

Learners, the learning environment, accessibility, and research at NorQuest will be the focus of action in this quadrant. Evaluation of EDI and its relationship to college stakeholders in the context of these four key elements of post-secondary education will be a key factor in this work.

Space, time, and relationships: This quadrant recognizes the value of promoting inclusive ways of understanding diversity at NorQuest. It establishes that the “how” is as important as the “what” in achieving EDI goals.

Central to this effort is the establishment of affinity groups, and other tactics and mechanisms to formalize the connections between NorQuest staff and the systems that cultivate support and collaboration.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) for updates on progress against actions.

EDI Council

The EDI Advisory Council (EDIAC) was established in August 2020 with a mandate to provide insight on EDI-related work and, ultimately, to develop an EDI strategy for the college.

Council members reflect a variety of identities and lived experiences. They also represent nearly all faculty and administrative areas at NorQuest. This includes instructors, researchers, administrators, student support providers, and department leaders with various levels of education, credentials, work experience, and service time at the college. Two vice-presidents were executive sponsors that support the council by bridging their voices to the Executive Team and vice-versa.

Anti-racism in action

NorQuest College’s strategic aspiration is to be a place where people come to transform their lives and find a place to belong—a place that helps make the aspirational attainable, and where there is a path for every learner. To achieve our strategic aspiration, NorQuest will invest in addressing the racism inherent in systems.

As more people are looking to participate in higher education, class and racial disparities in access and outcomes are becoming increasingly evident. Post-secondary institutions must take the necessary steps to support overcoming these disparities and structural inequities by providing specific supports for historically disadvantaged communities.





Listening campaign

The Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG) initiated a listening campaign by inviting NorQuest staff to join sharing circles. These circles are an Indigenous concept used to bring people together in safe and brave spaces to have difficult conversations.

Learnings from the first set of sharing circles helped inform the creation of four new types of circles: Black, Indigenous, BIPOC, and everyone. The goal was to design a process that identified gaps and barriers for those experiencing racism and racial discrimination at the college.

Feedback from the circles informed the creation of six recommendations, which were then used to inform the college's 2030 strategic plan.

This plan paves our path forward to systemically implement the six recommendations.

Anti-Racism Working Group

The Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG) was established in June 2020 with full leadership support and executive sponsorship. Membership was flexible and designed to allow participation of any staff who is interested in analyzing and creating anti-racism initiatives across the college.

The ARWG advises the executive leadership of NorQuest on issues of racism, provides recommendations, and creates an overall anti-racism strategy for the college. The ARWG also communicates and markets anti-racism initiatives throughout the college and enhances inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist culture at NorQuest.

Anti-racism recommendations

1. Anti-racism policy and complaints procedure

Create an anti-racism/racial discrimination policy and procedure to support the aim of becoming an inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonized organization.

2. Student-centred anti-racism process

Undertake an anti-racism consultation, analysis, and recommendation process with students as the primary stakeholder.

3. Resourcing BIPOC spaces

Dedicate time and resources to creating and sustaining BIPOC-only spaces to ensure a safe, welcoming, supportive, and flexible workplace and learning environment.

4. Resourcing and internal capacity-building

Each portfolio within the college should task at least two individuals with identifying gaps and recommending customized anti-racism initiatives and solutions for that portfolio. A successful pilot project has been completed and will be rolled out across the organization. These initiatives will not only help us ensure a safe, welcoming environment but also help NorQuest attract, grow, and develop team members.

5. Anti-racism training

Develop specific anti-racism training opportunities for continued professional development for NorQuest faculty and staff.

6. Governance structure

Develop a governance structure that effectively articulates accountability, resourcing, and the college's long-term commitments to anti-racism.

Please refer to [Appendix 2](#) for a detailed report of progress on actions.

Knowledge building

In line with leading practices on how to support BIPOC learners and employees, NorQuest College is also conducting a diversity survey that will collect voluntary demographic data. Results from the survey will allow NorQuest to better customize supports for different marginalized groups across the college. The diversity survey will help provide the data and knowledge that underpins each of these recommendations.

Community engagement

As NorQuest works to address systemic racial inequities, we recognize the important role communities play in dismantling systems of oppression as well. In October 2021, NorQuest began hosting quarterly stakeholder meetings with members of the Black community to explore and address racial inequities inside and outside the college doors.

NorQuest is committed to continue learning and growing with the communities we serve.



Alignment and connection: EDI and anti-racism

Our path forward

NorQuest's 2030 strategic plan: We are who we include is purpose-built to establish a structure that will create longstanding change. From institutional enhancements like NorQuest's new organizational redesign, to tactical initiatives like the Office of Safe Disclosure and roles focused specifically on EDI and anti-racism, NorQuest 2030 invests in the foundational resources and structures that will elevate EDI and anti-racism as areas of strategic importance.

Infusing EDI and anti-racism into all aspects of the college will further advance our vision. Portfolio strategic plans are key areas for integration and alignment of college operations with NorQuest's EDI and anti-racism goals. Each of our college portfolios has committed to uplifting EDI and anti-racism efforts at the college and have outlined specific areas for growth related to their area of expertise:

Academic: Grow toward becoming an anti-racist and anti-oppressive organization that recognizes systemic racism within its workplace and actively makes its existing systems and culture more equitable.

Learner experience: Herald diversity within our portfolio by seeking diversity at all levels and amplifying individual perspectives.

People: Partner across the organization to support and ensure belonging and inclusion.

External relations and partnerships: Develop and launch a college-wide partner evaluation rubric to ensure domestic and international partners align with EDI, anti-racism, and social impact values of the organization.

Marketing and communications: Prioritize a more inclusive and decolonized brand that reflects our diverse communities through storytelling, imagery, and voice.

Corporate services and finance: Create and nurture a work environment of high psychological safety and standards.

This path is one we will navigate together.



The values we aspire to live as an institution are being integrated into the very core of the work we do. This work is not simply about the expression of our values; it is about building the infrastructure for how this organization will act, work, and create impact.

By implementing the structures that support our values into the work we do, we can better model individual behaviour. The opportunity to serve our communities the way we expect to through NorQuest 2030 is an exciting one. **As we put in place the foundations for change to occur, our most essential resource—our people—will be agents for change to act in ways that are more just, more responsible, and more representative of how we see ourselves.**

Aligning with the objectives of NorQuest 2030

Prepare each learner for the changing workforce through the NorQuest Skills of Distinction: Inclusion, Resilience, and New Ways of Thinking, as in section 1.4 of the strategic plan objectives.

Fulfil our commitment to becoming an inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonized organization through an ongoing focus on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, as in section 2.3 of the strategic plan objectives.

Work with socially responsible organizations and partners, and promote values of inclusion to increase our impact and make a significant, meaningful, and positive effect on communities, as in section 3.3 of the strategic plan objectives.

Appendix 1

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion progress report - January 2022

Background

NorQuest has a long history of engaging in work that seeks to create equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in our classrooms and workplaces. However, this work was not contained within any specific framework or plan; rather, it relied on individual expertise and enthusiasm within the college.

In 2020 NorQuest identified the need to increase internal capacity in the areas of EDI and anti-racism. Although NorQuest had been performing in these areas, NorQuest had no coordinated, strategic approach to ensuring it was an equitable organization.

In August 2020, the EDIAC (EDI advisory committee) was struck under the leadership of the Colbourne Institute for Inclusive Leadership (CIIL). EDIAC represented a wide variety of characteristic-based diversity, as well as a diversity of roles and functions at NorQuest College. In November 2020, an EDI consultant was hired to support EDIAC's work guide development of an EDI strategy.

EDIAC was the primary working and consultative body for this work. They were engaged in issues identification, identifying effective models for EDI delivery, and strategic plan writing. The committee's work resulted in NorQuest's EDI Plan, which approved by Executive Team in July of 2021.

The path forward

The strategy is built upon the following four quadrants of the EDI framework, which reflect distinct but connected areas of focus required to meaningfully move EDI forward at NorQuest College. These quadrants are:

1. Done by 2021
 - a) Historically burdened fruit
 - b) Compliance activities
 - c) No further research necessary
 - d) Goals known but not prioritized/resourced
 - e) Not necessarily "strategic" in the traditional sense
2. Action equaling equity
 - a) More traditionally strategic
 - b) Big bold actions
 - c) Long-term goals, actions, and accountabilities
 - d) Alignment with other strategies and plans
3. Space, time and relationships
 - a) Tension between "Action and Holding Time & Space"
 - b) Not traditional "strategy" language – This quadrant is unique to NorQuest
 - c) Promotes "other ways of knowing, growing, and learning" in the EDI space and throughout NorQuest

4. Connect and intersecting

a) How and where does EDI relate to the rest of NorQuest and other EDI work?

b) How and where do identities and initiatives intersect?

c) How and where does EDI relate to the community?

EDI strategy progress

Goal	Quadrant	Timeline	Accountability	Status
Determine communications + engagement model for anti-racism and EDI at NorQuest	1	2021	Communications	In progress
Create and approve an EDI policy	1	2021	Office of the VP External Relations and Partnerships (ERP)	In progress (March/April 2022)
Determine scope, model and resources for EDI training for staff	1	2021	EDI Office	Complete (Delivery to start in Feb 2022)
Create tools and processes to apply an EDI lens to policy creation and review	1	2021	Office of the VP ERP and Policy Office	Complete
Develop privacy and access protocols for EDI-related data and data collection at NorQuest	1	2021	Office of the VP ERP, Culture, Compliance, Research Office	Complete
Undertake a system review of human resources, with an initial focus on hiring and promotion	1	2021	Human Resources	Complete
Establish a “safe disclosure mechanism” to enable members of the NorQuest community to raise issues, receive advice, and reduce the risk of retaliation	1	2021	Office of the VP ERP	Model complete, implementation pending for 2022 budget cycle

Goal	Quadrant	Timeline	Accountability	Status
Create EDI asset map for NorQuest	4	2021	CIIL	Complete
Establish protocols for connecting, intersecting, and measuring the variety of EDI work at NorQuest	4	2021	Office of the VP ERP, EDIAC	Ongoing
Determine the role and relationship of EDI and learners at NorQuest	2	2022	VP Academic	Ongoing
Examine EDI relative to research at NorQuest	2	2022	VP Academic	In progress
Create expectations and resources to support the development of anti-oppression and anti-racist pedagogy and learning environments at NorQuest	2	2022	Office of EDI, Indigenous House of Learning	Ongoing
Develop actions to achieve a measure of “3” in the three foundational categories of the GDEIB	2	2022	EDIAC	In progress
Establish employee diversity affinity groups	3	2022	Human Resources, Culture, Office of the VP ERP	In progress
Develop actions to achieve a “4” in the GDEIB’s three foundational categories	2	2023	EDIAC	Planning stage
Review and recommend accessibility measures (related to disability) for NorQuest learners and staff	2	2023	Office of EDI	Planning stage
Develop actions to achieve a “5” in GDEIB’s foundational categories	2	2024	EDIAC	Planning stage
Renew the strategy	2	2024	ELT	Planning stage

Appendix 2

2022 Anti-racism updates

The table below is an overview of the Anti-Racism Recommendations approved by the NorQuest Executive Team in May 2021. The table provides a summary of each of the recommendations, where it connects to the NorQuest 2030 Strategic Plan, updates on the implementation of each recommendations, and project timeline for 2022.

Anti-racism recommendation	Recommendation description	Connection to strategic plan	Updates & projected timelines for 2022
Recommendation 1: Anti-racism policy and complaints procedure	The create an anti-racism/racial discrimination policy	People 2.3 – Fulfil our commitment to becoming an inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonized organization through an ongoing focus on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion	In partnership with Compliance and the EDI strategy, continue drafting our anti-racism policy for Executive Team approval Timeline: June 2022
Recommendation 2: Student-centered anti-racism process	Undertake an anti-racism consultation, analysis, and recommendation process with students as the primary stakeholder	Learner 1.1 – Attract and retain learners by transforming the learner experience, anticipating learners’ needs, improving accessibility, and supporting mental health and wellness	In partnership with the Lx Portfolio and the Re-Imagine Higher Ed strategy, create dialogue circles to help NorQuest members listen and understand learner concerns about race and racism at the college Timeline: October 2022

Anti-racism recommendation	Recommendation description	Connection to strategic plan	Updates & projected timelines for 2022
<p>Recommendation 3: Resourcing BIPOC Spaces</p>	<p>Dedicate time and resources to creating and sustaining BIPOC-only spaces</p>	<p>People 2.2 – Support and ensure a safe, welcoming, supportive, and flexible workplace and learning environment</p>	<p>Due to public health’s changing Covid restrictions, revisit this recommendation to determine to create successful virtual BIPOC spaces. Do future planning to determine how these spaces will look like once individuals can safely return to in-person activities</p> <p>Timeline: September 2022</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Resourcing and Internal Capacity Building</p>	<p>Each portfolio within the college should task at least two individuals with identifying gaps and recommending customized anti-racism initiatives and solutions for that portfolio.</p>	<p>Learner 1.1 – Attract and retain learners by transforming the learner experience, anticipating learners’ needs, improving accessibility, and supporting mental health and wellness.</p> <p>People 2.1 – Attract, grow, and develop team members through a people-first approach that sparks innovation and continuous learning.</p>	<p>In partnership with the CS&F Portfolio, in July 2021 a project was piloted that dedicated a 0.2 FTE position within CS&F to support the specific needs of the portfolio. The pilot project has demonstrated successful outcomes and will be expanded across all portfolios.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>

Anti-racism recommendation	Recommendation description	Connection to strategic plan	Updates & projected timelines for 2022
<p>Recommendation 5: Anti-Racism Training</p>	<p>Create specific anti-racism training opportunities for continued professional development. Training should be considered optional but highly encouraged for all staff, especially people leaders.</p>	<p>People 2.3 – Fulfil our commitment to becoming an inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonized organization through an ongoing focus on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.</p>	<p>Ongoing training covering introductory concepts to EDI and Anti-Racism is given to different teams and portfolios across the College when requested by leadership. college-wide anti-racism training is currently being developed.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: Governance Structure</p>	<p>Create a governance structure that effectively articulates accountability, resourcing, and the College’s long-term commitments to anti-racism.</p>	<p>People 2.2 – Support and ensure a safe, welcoming, supportive, and flexible workplace and learning environment.</p> <p>Connection 3.3 – Work with socially responsible organizations and partners, and promote values of inclusion to increase our impact and significantly, meaningfully, and positively impact communities</p>	<p>To align with our strategic plan and creation of an EDI Office, revisit this recommendation once the organizational structure is finalized. We are currently coordinating with key areas across the college, like the Indigenous Relations & Support Team, People & Culture, and the OSJA.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>

Internal capacity

The following section gives an overview into internal anti-racism initiative happening across the College outside of the Anti-Racism Recommendations:

Redesigning the Practical Nursing program

The “BLOOM in PN” project is an initiative aimed at redesigning core elements of the Practical Nurse program from an EDI and Anti-Racism lens. The aim of the project is to better support learners and employees but creating more equitable practice with a specific focus on racial equity.

BLOOM = Be anti-racist, Lift up BIPOC voices, Optimize Opportunities, Manifest EDI

Timeline: June 2022

Student complaints procedure

In partnership with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs the student complaints procedure is being redesign from on EDI, anti-racism, and mental health lens to better support learners and issues they may bring forwards. Internal policies and practices are being review to ensure learners have a more seamless experience when filing a complaint with the OSJA

Timeline: April 2022

Scholarship, awards, & bursaries

In collaboration with the Lx Portfolio, how NorQuest College awards learners with scholarships and bursaries is being reevaluated from an anti-racist perspective to reduce bias in the scholarship process and to increase the level of access BIPOC students have to scholarships and bursaries at the college

Timeline: Ongoing

College Wide Learning Days

College wide learning days such as Teaching & Learning, Culture, and Truth & Reconciliation days are used as opportunities in engage with the larger college community on issue regarding anti-oppression, decolonization, and anti-racism. These teaching opportunities are directly tie to our strategic commitment of “becoming an inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonized organization through an ongoing focus on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion” and have been successful in introducing complex topic to many areas across the college.

Timeline: Ongoing

External engagement

The following section gives an overview into external anti-racism initiative happening with the larger College community:

Students4Change

Students 4 Change has monthly meetings with the Anti-Racism Consultant to support the College's continued response to supporting Black students and implementing the 4 Calls to Action.

Quarterly stakeholder meetings

The first Quarterly Stakeholder meeting was on in October 2021 with the next one scheduled for May 2022. The aim of these meetings is to meet and listen to members of the Black community on how to better support Black students. The first meeting was successful in communicating the College's commitment to support BIPOC students and understanding concerns members of the Black community have in accessing post-secondary education.

Race-based data

In line with leading best practice on how to support BIPOC learners and employees, NorQuest College through the EDI Capacity Grant will be conducting a diversity survey that will collect voluntary demographics data in January 2022. Result from the survey will allow Norquest to better customize supports for different marginalized groups across the college. Additionally, the College is looking to expand collecting race-based data in our HR processes to better track the hiring and retention rates of BIPOC employees.

