



Master of Museum Studies Student Association (MUSSA)

Faculty of Information, University of Toronto

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Faculty Meeting RE: Anti-Black Racism Actions & Addressing DEI in MMSt

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Goal: Meeting organized by Professor Cara Krmpotich with MUSSA & MPOC to share how the Master of Museum Studies (MMSt) Faculty wants to take action to redress anti-Black racism in our programs, and to know what the student commitment is to this process.

Introductions:

1. Museum Professionals of Colour (MPOC)
 - a. Megan Sue-Chue-Lam
 - b. Chloe Houde
 - c. Dominica Tang
 - d. Denise Tenio
2. Master of Museum Studies Student Association (MUSSA)
 - a. Melissa Mertsis
 - b. Jordan Vetter
 - c. Lindsay Chisholm
3. Individual students
 - a. Name undisclosed
 - b. Name undisclosed

Notes:

1. **Cara to go over Faculty's draft action plan and meeting notes**
 - a. **General discussion**
 - i.* MMSt Faculty met Friday last week (June 12) to generate a list of actions to begin implementing immediately
 - ii.* Seeking to understand Faculty's responsibility and student commitment to be part of the change
 - iii.* Can advocate at the Faculty level, but don't have control outside the program
 - iv.* Mindful of personal circumstances and individual academic freedom
 1. However, no instructor felt their academic freedom was infringed upon in discussing the actions
 - v.* Currently, the faculty is not a leader Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI), and not in a position to be leaders, but can amplify
 - vi.* Cara will report back to the Dean to let her know what kinds of resources are required to implement the actions

b. Action plan (draft) - see [Appendix](#) for full document

i. Individual level - instructor or course (completely dependent upon the individual)

1. Goal of 30% increase in Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) content - authorship, case studies, examples
 - a. Consider different kinds of diversity, e.g. ableism
2. Instructors will commit to attending at least 5 trainings/workshops during this coming academic year related to anti-racism, anti-oppression or cultural competency, for self-education and/or pedagogical improvement
 - a. Commitment depends on the individual
 - b. Longer term maintenance plan needs to be discussed for future years and reassess based on individual profs' experiences
 - i. Some have already completed some training, others haven't

ii. MMSt program level

1. Obtain student opinions on incorporating cultural competency or anti-racism training into a mandatory course for all MMSt & CDP students - similar to Cite It Right, or within a required course itself
 - a. Offered in first year, with extra sessions available for students currently in 2nd & 3rd year
2. GLAM DEI course is being developed, with the help of Cheryl Blackman
 - a. Will be posted for a sessional instructor position this summer (July), aiming for a BIPOC individual which will be carefully targeted and described in the role requirements
 - b. How to ensure that a new DEI hire (presuming it will be a BIPOC) will not feel the sole responsibility for taking on all this work?
 - i. Sessional position for this summer
 - ii. Aiming for longer term hire, teaching or research stream, to help guide the work but not be responsible for implementing all of it or representing all of BIPOC
3. Push for paid internships - relationship between labour and diversity
 - a. Might be provided in the form of a stipend or matching contributions

iii. Faculty level - advocacy and support

1. Introducing an Assistant or Associate Dean position, more senior level staff member to bring social justice and not-for-profit experience and DEI transformation strategy for the Faculty as a whole, outside of the bureaucratic responsibilities of UofT
2. Following through on BIPOC student scholarship funding idea that was raised earlier this year at a Faculty meeting
 - a. 5 scholarships to avoid tokenism, including minimum 1 for international students
 - b. 2-year funding package to cover tuition
3. Diversifying recruitment and admissions to admit more BIPOC students is a longer term process, already too late for 2020 incoming students
 - a. Need to avoid tokenism, rely on a different kind of expertise and recruitment strategy
 - b. Look at other institutions with good recruitment models
4. Hire an external consultant (or equivalent) to do DEI audits and collect data to record changes and impact over time
 - a. Start with audit of what is on the syllabi, auditing the instruction itself or effectiveness of teaching is trickier and a mid-term goal, and recruitment is a longer term goal for the incoming 2021 cohort
 - b. Note that sessional instructors have different contractual obligations and rights than permanent faculty
 - c. Auditors directly observing teaching behaviour in the classroom is possible and instructors can ask for it, but some feel very strongly against
 - d. Can integrate questions at the Faculty and program level into course evaluations for students to provide feedback

iv. Other related actions and questions

1. Emphasis on relying on external experts to evaluate the Faculty because it is a lot to ask from students and staff where there are hierarchical relationships in play and conflicts of interest, which are not conducive to honest answers
2. Has the Faculty followed up with hiring Wendy Ng/her firm as a consultant? Cara to follow up with conversations that began at the Museum Detox panel.
3. Hiring a consultant should be more urgent than long-term, to be the impetus for all other changes within the program. Begin collecting data now even for longer term projects.

2. Student Input & Survey Responses

a. Context

- i.* What was asked of students in the survey sent out by MUSSA & MPOC:
 1. What comments or concerns would you like us to raise with the Faculty? [in a meeting with Prof. Krmpotich in order to discuss the MMSt Faculty's "emerging plans" to "redress anti-Black racism in our programs."]

b. Student Voices

- i.* **Note that the following perspectives are paraphrased from student responses during the meeting and some details are omitted to maintain anonymity of students*
- ii.* Student A:
 1. Wants to support peers and see greater diversity in guest speakers
- iii.* Student B:
 1. Wants a broader perspective of the field outside of a Canadian and North American perspective - greater international representation and diversity
 2. The program content does not reflect the diversity of the city it is in
 3. Lack of diversity in the Faculty members and in the content they choose
 4. Only a few BIPOC individuals in the program - not a comfortable environment for them to raise their perspectives and express themselves, among profs or peers
 5. Guest speakers also not receptive to hearing criticism of their work
- iv.* Student C:
 1. Antisemitism from a professor and TA
 2. Lack of supports in the Faculty and school at large, or among peers
 3. No accountability for discriminatory remarks
 4. Class discussions uncomfortable not because they are "challenging" but because they discredit individual perspectives
- v.* Student D:
 1. Insufficient and lack of land acknowledgements in courses
 2. Insensitive instruction regarding race and gender
 3. Dismissive responses to student concerns
 4. Lack of diversity in syllabi
 5. Look at topics like Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ issues not in isolation in their own course, but in context across all courses
 6. Wants to ensure issues aren't just addressed but are implemented with sincerity

- vi.** Student E:
 1. Professor dismissing student concerns
 2. Harmful content being shown in an inappropriate/insensitive manner
 3. Lack of trigger warnings or prefacing harmful content being shared
 4. Causing a lot of harm and trauma to students
- vii.** Student F:
 1. Ethnic gnosticism
 2. People discussing issues in educational environments that they are not implicated in or experts in
 3. Profs can contextualize discussions and provide guidelines in syllabi for how to properly engage in discussions and what everyone's role is, ensuring that BIPOC students are not harmed and that discussions can be productive
- viii.** Student G:
 1. Students are performing a lot of free labour - DEI work shouldn't be done by students who are unpaid
 2. Issues with Faculty's process of hiring teaching staff
 3. BIPOC students being tokenized in class discussions - they shouldn't have to educate others or speak up to correct others
 4. Provide avenues for student complaints
- ix.** Student H:
 1. Faculty need to be educated on how to talk about racism

c. Cara's Response

- i.** Will take these concerns to the Dean
- ii.** Aware now of the need for accountability among professors/peers
- iii.** Can't just diversify student body unless the supports are there for BIPOC students within the Faculty

3. Missing from Faculty's Action Plan

- a.** Consider looking at who the program partners with for internships and exhibition projects (Police Museum for example)
 - i.** Already looking at implementing memorandums of understanding with partnering institutions - ask what their actions are related to anti-Black racism, DEI
 - ii.** Consider smaller organizations
- b.** Evaluations for profs from faculty and students // Following up & accountability on staff cultural sensitivity training with external reviews and student evaluations
 - i.** In tandem with external consultant audit
 - ii.** Make a safer space for students and faculty who identify as BIPOC
 - iii.** Consider adding student feedback on cultural sensitivity displayed by profs into course evaluations

4. Discussions and Next Steps

- a. As the incoming Director of MMSt, what is Prof. Mihalache's involvement in this process? Are other Faculty involved? Will Cara be involved during her leave?
 - i. Cara wants to stay involved and take responsibility, and is still part of a hiring committee despite no teaching obligations beginning in July
 - ii. Cara to share what was discussed in this meeting with Irina and other Faculty members to delegate responsibility where necessary
 - iii. TBD on a continuity plan

- b. What are immediate next steps on the part of the Faculty? How are students involved?
 - i. **Host a town hall** open to students, alumni, peers, colleagues in the sector, etc. to determine the soundness of the actions, make the strategy and language clear, allow for discussion, and agree upon the actions
 1. Cara to schedule for late next week
 - ii. **Cara to communicate to the Dean** in advance of the town hall the proposed action plan and the resources that are expected to be needed to make the action plan happen
 - iii. **Convene DEI experts in the field of museum studies** - a working group of 6-7 people experienced in this area to share specific advice and ideas in terms of the action plan and in the context of a professional program
 - iv. Emphasis on the real need to train the Faculty in terms of anti-racism in the classroom
 - v. Looking to other faculties and associations, particularly those with Associate Deans of DEI, to see how they have navigated/initiated DEI in light of unions, academic freedom, etc.
 - vi. Set up checkpoints to assess transparency and accountability towards achieving goals and actions being taken
 1. Understand the different levels of accountabilities - professors to the school vs. to the students

5. Future questions arising from students after the meeting

- a. Training for TAs? Acknowledging that TAs are in a separate union.
- b. What is UofT's relationship with Toronto Police (Campus Police) & other similar investments?
- c. Cara has acknowledged the questions, to be addressed at a future meeting

Appendix

Museum Studies Actions to redress anti-Black racism at the University, in our Program, and in the Field

Draft Document June 16, 2020

Comments or Questions? Please contact Cara.Krmpotich@utoronto.ca

Action Point	Resources Needed	Timeline
INDIVIDUAL		
<p>Augment BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) content: authorship, case studies, examples</p> <p>Set goal: 30% increase (with understanding that this might differ depending on area/subject)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Assistants & Teaching Assistants, in partnership with librarians, to develop resources that faculty members could access for their courses; • Time to read, process, and assess these resources for use in courses; • Hire external consultant/researcher (NOT students!) to conduct an audit of current courses and to collect data and measure change over time 	Short-term with long term overall impacts
<p>Attend anti-racism, anti-oppression, and cultural competency training</p> <p>Set goal: Individual instructors to attend 5 sessions for purposes of self-education and/or pedagogical improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors to attend workshops organized by the Faculty, Equity office and/or external organizations 	Short-term with long term overall impacts
PROGRAM		
<p>Incorporate mandatory anti-racism training for all MMST & CDP students in core courses (MSL 2370?) – this will be offered in the first year, with extra sessions for the students currently in second/third year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty to hire facilitators to develop and run these training sessions 	Short-term with long term overall impacts
<p>Permanent Faculty hire in the area of DEI and Museums/GLAMs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty-led initiative • Increase in-house expertise • Develop/deliver relevant courses 	Long-term

Set Goal: Hiring approval/process during 2020/21 with start date July 1, 2021		
Re-organize existing funds to make paid internships for all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program-led initiative • Needs support of Development, Careers and Faculty 	Short and Long-term
Provide matching funds to under-funded cultural institutions committee to DEI values and practices, to hire our interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program-led initiative • Needs support of Development, Careers and Faculty 	Short and Long-term
FACULTY		
Faculty-wide hire of a senior staff member (the job description should be inclusive and welcoming to a non-academic professional with experience in social justice, non profit, arts and culture, etc.) to lead the transformation around DEI at the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty-led initiative • Supported by MMSt 	Hire should happen short-term (as in soon) but the position should be permanent (the long run)
Targeted scholarships for BIPOC students: 5 scholarships to cover full tuition for 2 years each; 1 scholarship targeted to international students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty-led initiative, and expertise required so that these scholarships are not seen as tokenism 	Long-term
Hire an external consultant (or equivalent) to conduct diversity audits and collect data to record changes and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire external consultant/researcher (NOT students!) to conduct an audit of current courses and to collect data and measure change over time • Commit to annual audit for at least five years 	Short- and Long-term

Diversify recruitment and admissions to admit more BIPOC students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty-led initiative, and expertise required so that this process is not a form of tokenism; this might also require going outside traditional modes of recruitment 	Begin in 2020 for 2021 cohort; Long-term effects
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Additional Suggestions: When developing MOU's or Internship contracts with partner institutions, ask specifically about EDI, and anti-racism strategies.

Include Divisional and Program level questions in Course Evaluations that address EDI in classroom.