Student Feedback on Improving Anti-Racism on Campus
As the world erupted over the murder of George Floyd, the African & Caribbean Student Association launched a feedback campaign to uncover how racism affects UCalgary students.
BREAKING DOWN THE RESPONSE
FORMS OF ON-CAMPUS DISCRIMINATION

ANTI-BLACK RACISM

ANTI-INDIGENOUS SENTIMENT

ISLAMOPHOBIA

ANTI-SEMITIC SENTIMENT

XENOPHOBIA

MICROAGGRESSIONS
Anti-Muslim posters at University of Calgary prompt rally of support

Students denounce posters questioning Holocaust at University of Calgary

'‘It’s really disappointing and shocking that inflammatory posters like this were put up,’ student leader says


About a dozen posters, like this one, questioning whether six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, were put up on doors and walls around the U of C recently. (The Gauntlet)
STUDENT EXPERIENCES

"My professor relentlessly undervalued the significance of Indigenous communities, and occasionally called them Indians."

"I have seen professors falsely assume a student's intelligence, based on their English proficiency or racial background."

"I brought my valid concerns to someone higher up, only to be dismissed and told my professors intentions were misunderstood."
REAL EXAMPLES

Former Calgary Dinos employee arrested for alleged racial attack on woman

Police have arrested a former University of Calgary Dinos employee after a video posted online showed him spitting on a woman and yelling a racial slur

Alanna Smith
Jul 19, 2020 • Last Updated 3 months ago • 2 minute read

‘It’s okay to be white’ messages appear on U of C campus

Photos courtesy Women's Studies and Feminist Club (left), Reddit (right)

A cyclist, identified as Justin Williams by the University of Calgary, is seen riding his bicycle from the opposite direction and spitting on Lau before yelling a racial slur in this Instagram screengrab. PHOTO BY INSTAGRAM
"Professors blatantly using the n-word during lectures. Many of whom have been brought to the attention of UofC admin without any disciplinary action or follow-ups."

"Instructors and TA's making racist, dehumanizing, & derogatory remarks on BIPOC nations and communities during classroom lectures."

"There are faculty & staff members who believe that BIPOC undergraduates are strictly inferior or less than their white counterparts."
Painted protests: U of C's The Rocks get multiple message makeovers

After starting day painted with Confederate flag, students traded messages in paint on campus boulder

CBC News - Posted: Sep 25, 2017 10:59 PM MT | Last Updated: September 25, 2017

The rocks outside the MacEwan Student Centre on the University of Calgary campus were painted with a Confederate flag Monday and the message “Heritage not hate.” Students on campus were quick to paint over the flag with messages of love and acceptance. (@RomyYYCTwitter)
"The ultra-conservative nature of teaching at UCalgary bleeds into our pedagogy and can become entrenched as the truth."

"I've had professors nickname me, without my consent, for their own personal convenience. Decolonizing teaching begins when my real name is accepted."

"Post-secondary education is meant to be the most "enlightening" part of my lifelong learning journey. But without anti-racist programming, how can I navigate a world laced with systemic racism?"
INSIGHTS FROM STUDENTS
Classes are often taught based on historically white or colonial perspectives. These westernized views are shaping how students perceive the world.

The lack of diversity in post-secondary teaching and leadership sends a strong signal about who belongs in academic spaces.

I’ve noticed that my courses are undervaluing the scientific and academic achievements of BIPOC scholars in the Global South.
After four years (45 classes) of attending this university, I've come across only one black instructor. That's a huge problem.

The only program (African Studies) that I'm passionate about is underfunded, understaffed, and not prioritized by my Faculty.

The university is more concerned about protecting their own staff, than acknowledging real student concerns.
CORE WEAKNESSES
Lack of Anti-Racism Education for:

- Professors requiring implicit bias or anti-racism training
- Student clubs seeking to become more inclusive
- Faculty and Department staff seeking to enhance their EDI initiatives
LETS TALK SOLUTIONS
Collect and utilize race-based data advantageously to understand the systemic barriers that exist in post-secondary education.

Intentionally pursue additional BIPOC staff to better represent UCalgary's diverse student body.

Pursuing disciplinary action and other accountability measures when necessary for professors who have repeatedly discriminated against students.

Expand the universities African Studies program to further enrich undergraduate knowledge on structural racism, stereotypes, white privilege, & colonial legacies.
Acknowledge the economic barriers that exist for marginalized students and create funding opportunities to address these socioeconomic discrepancies.

Recognize the lack of tenured positions given to non-white faculty members by re-evaluating how equitable the system is.

Create accessible platforms for students, staff, and faculty to access anti-racism (& implicit bias) training and support.

Officially recognize Black History Month by highlighting the achievements of your black faculty members.
LETS TALK ACTION ITEMS
Action Items

- Proactively denounce acts of hatred towards marginalized student groups on campus
- Start addressing the lack of diversity among professors, staff, and executive leadership
- Continue to host events, workshops, and activities to dismantle the notion that racism is a taboo topic
Establish and regularly advertise safe channels for students to submit concerns regarding discriminatory activity on campus.