

# Community Safety Council

## Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2020  
10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Via Zoom

**In attendance:** Lorne Foster, Swati Rai, Aldo Altomare, Amal Awini, Andrew R Little, Andria Phillips, Arthi Velupillai, Bo Joseph, Boyan Demchuk, Brendan Schulz, Carol McAulay, Christine Sinclair, Crista MacArthur, Daryl Nauman, Debbie L Hansen, Dragan Spasojevic, Eric Mezin, George Grigoriadis, Graeme Stewart, Jessica Pidwerbecki, John Amanatides, John Mayberry, Kien Saningong Azinwi, Laura Taylor, Lucy Fromowitz, Mary Catherine Masciangelo, Michael Mahon, Nakyta Folkes, Paul Elliott, Peter Mumford, Ron Tapley, Ross McMillan, Samina Sami, Scarlett Farquhar, Sebastian Vives, Sheila Cote-Meek, Stacey Berquist, Stewart Dankner, Suharshi Perera, Susan Seaby, Taylor Morihovitis, Teresa DuCroix, Terry Maley, Yanni Dagonas, Zina DiFranco

### 1. Opening Remarks

Lorne Foster, Chair, welcomed members to the meeting. He noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and safety concerns, the meeting that was to be held in March 2020 was cancelled and subsequent meetings were postponed to the Fall. Future meetings will be held remotely via Zoom.

Lorne Foster began the meeting with the land acknowledgement.

### 2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the meeting was approved.

### 3. York University Response to Anti-Black Racism

Lorne Foster opened this segment of the meeting by noting that anti-Black racism is linked to safety and the protests that have been occurring in Canada and in other parts of the world highlight the need for action. In June 2020 the President issued a communication about York's commitment to stand firm against anti-Black racism, and the University has been taking steps to address this issue.

Guest speaker Sheila Cote-Meek Vice-President Equity, People & Culture (VPEPC) provided an overview of the actions York is undertaking to build a more equitable and inclusive community:

- 1) The development of an anti-black racism framework. The Office of the VPEPC has undertaken a number of meetings with Black colleagues, faculty, staff, and students to discuss anti-Black racism, not only in the general society but also on York's campuses. The President, Sheila Cote-Meek, and other senior administrators have met with approximately 110 individuals and have received written feedback from approximately 14 of them. That information has been used to put together a broad framework to address anti-Black racism. The framework will be provided back to the group for a

second round of consultations in early November 2020. As well a town hall is being planned to engage the entire University. Various faculties are also taking measures against anti-Black racism. Implementation plans will start as early as December 2020.

- 2) The development of a central Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan. A committee has been formed to start working on an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion plan. The Office of the VPEPC expects to have the plan approved and in place by June 2021. The plan will bring together the Indigenous framework, the anti-Black racism framework, and other equity issues that York will address moving forward.

Other initiatives include:

- 14 Black scholars are being hired to fill new tenure-stream positions throughout the University to address the under-representation of Black faculty.
- The Office of the VPEPC recently hired Professor Carl James as senior advisor on equity and representation at York, and he has been instrumental in advancing initiatives to address anti-Black racism.
- The affirmative action program will be reviewed to better understand where inequities exist. The Office of the VPEPC is in the process of sending out the self-identification survey, which is sent out on a yearly basis to faculty and staff; and is in the process of developing a post-doc fellowship program for emerging scholars who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour.
- The Centre for Human Rights is developing additional anti-racism workshops for faculty, staff, and students. Workshops will be translated into French for Glendon College. Participation and the response to the workshops has been good and they may be developed into modular and on-line formats.

#### **4. Cromwell Report Recommendations**

Lorne Foster informed Council that following a troubling protest event on Keele campus last fall, the University engaged Chief Justice Cromwell to undertake an independent review of the event and formed an internal working group co-chaired by Lucy Fromowitz, Vice-Provost Students and Sheila Cote-Meek to follow-up on Chief Justice Cromwell's recommendations.

Guest speaker Lucy Fromowitz provided a slide presentation and overview of the event and actions underway in response to the event:

- The event was held by a recognized student group on November 20<sup>th</sup>, and another recognized student group protested the event.
- The event escalated into a situation where the Toronto Police and York's security officials were called in to keep the two groups apart and everyone safe. The behaviour was unacceptable. York is committed to freedom of expression and has an obligation to ensure a safe environment where people can express diverse views. Chief Justice Cromwell was commissioned to do a full review and investigation of the event, and to provide recommendations on what the University might have done differently.

- The internal working group is addressing 41 recommendations focused on three broad themes:
  1. Policies/Procedures and Guidelines Review;
  2. Individual and Group Accountability; and
  3. Education Initiatives, Training and Skill Development Initiatives.
- The University decided not to proceed with the Cromwell report recommendation related to special constables.
- In the first few months, a great deal of work was done to research best practices, and guidelines, policies, and procedures in the following areas:
  - Temporary Use of University Space Policy and Procedures
  - York University Student Club Recognition Rules
  - Presidential Regulation 4
  - Policy on Human Rights (Discrimination and Harassment Policy)
- Also, three education initiatives were initiated:
  1. REI and SCLD have collaborated on identifying topics and learning outcomes for workshops that are being consulted on.
  2. SCLD developed and delivered expanded training modules for student organizations to emphasize roles and responsibilities under the various policies/procedures/guidelines.
  3. Discussions have begun with faculty to develop lectures/panel discussions designed to highlight and support the commonality of experiences despite religious and cultural differences.
- From October to the end of December 2020, the focus will be on:
  - Community Safety
  - Community Engagement
  - President Regulation 4
  - Education Initiatives

At the conclusion of the presentation, Lorne Foster opened the floor for questions and comments related to the presentations on Anti-Black Racism and the Cromwell Report.

A member commented that it's important to ensure that the entire University community is aware of issues surrounding the Cromwell Report, especially issues surrounding security, so that such a situation does not occur again.

A question was asked about whether the anti-Black racism framework will consider the demands brought forth by student leaders. In response, it was clarified that the framework is being informed by all the information that has been received to date from the York community. The framework will address the issues in a broad manner. It will not contain specific actions but will include specific objectives. Consideration is being given to the education component as well as other elements that have been raised by several groups across campus.

A question was asked about what the short-term goals are to hold people accountable now given that there are components of the framework that will not take effect for another one or two years,

such as the hiring of Black professors. In response, it was acknowledged that the recruitment process for Black scholars will take time, however, other initiatives have already been undertaken such as the appointment of Professor Carl James as senior advisor on equity and representation. Also, the Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion's workshops on anti-racism are being stepped up and will continue. Further, the framework should be ready this December 2020 and will be actioned quite quickly.

## **5. Previous Meeting Minutes**

A question was asked about the status of the President's Community Safety Awards program (Item 4. viii in the previous minutes). In response, it was indicated that the plan is to go forward with the program, however there will not be an in-person ceremony due to safety concerns associated with the pandemic.

There being no other questions or concerns, the minutes of the November 15, 2019 meeting were approved.

## **6. Community Safety Strategic Plan**

Carol McAulay, Vice-President Finance and Administration (VPFA) and Samina Sami, Executive Director, Community Safety provided an update on the Community Safety Strategic plan which was distributed to Council members in advance of the meeting.

Carol McAulay indicated that the Community Safety department has been busy leading the University's Emergency Operations Centre and coordinating the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Office of the VPFA is committed to supporting the Community Safety department and the important work of the Community Safety Council in shaping safety policies, processes, and programs for the University.

Samina Sami proceeded to share a few updates on the strategic plan.

- The plan was launched last year with extensive input from the Council and the broader York community. Several safety initiatives have been implemented and will continue to be implemented. The plan takes into consideration not only the physical dimensions such as lighting and physical infrastructure, but also the social dimension such as racism, harassment and discrimination that are also important to safety and well-being. It emphasizes the importance of transparency in safety matters, such as in the actions being taken by the department in response to the Cromwell Report and the anti-Black racism framework.
- A new Safety Council was formed at Glendon College to create a focal point for discussion of safety issues specific to Glendon.
- New policies and procedures have been developed including the video surveillance (CCTV) guidelines that were distributed to Council members in advance of the meeting.
- Information on how security officials are trained has been put onto the website.
- A pilot project has been implemented to respond to homeless people on campus. The pilot brings together local community agencies that work closely with Security teams and other teams on campus.

- Another project through which nursing students were providing supports to homeless people on campus was also initiated, however, it has been put on hold due to the pandemic.
- Public education initiatives have also been implemented to address issues raised by Council (e.g., issues related to slippery sidewalks, animal safety, safety around construction sites) and to promote community awareness of safety supports and services. Several Council members assisted with the implementation of these initiatives.

A question was asked regarding whether food security is addressed in the plan. In response, it was noted that food security is not specifically referenced in the plan, and that community agencies that deal with food and shelter have been stretched during the pandemic.

A member noted that even with much fewer students on campus, up to 30 students use the food support centre on campus on the days that it is open and that it is a critical service for students.

## **7. York University Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Lorne Foster invited members to share any concerns or suggestions they may have regarding York University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic with Carol McAulay, who is a member of the President's Emergency Policy Group and Samina Sami who is leading the Emergency Operations Centre.

Carol McAulay commented that since the onset of the pandemic, the EOC has done incredible work in helping the University do business in a different way. She also thanked staff who are required to continue to work on campus to provide necessary services, and everyone who has had to pivot to remote work, teaching and learning. She indicated that now that positive COVID-19 cases are rising, there will be a slowing down of the return of programs and services to campus as per direction from Toronto Public Health.

Samina Sami explained how the EOC works. It follows the province's IMS guidelines on how to respond and prepare and plan for an emergency. The EOC is designed for nimble coordination in an emergency and is available 24/7 until the emergency is over.

A member expressed concern that preparations for workers returning to campus are not in place, and asked how the University will ensure that cleaning, PPE, and sanitizers are available when departments return to campus. In response, it was indicated that when departments return to campus, the EOC will ensure that all necessary health and safety supports are in place. The governance for approval to return to campus is quite high, and any return to campus plans must be reviewed by the EOC for health and safety considerations.

A member expressed concern about the safety of staff who due to the nature of their work must work in close proximity to one another. Sometimes they use the same change rooms and shower facilities, and disinfecting after every person who uses the facilities is not practical. The member also asked what the policy is for staff members who test positive, and would their coworkers and families be required to self-isolate? In response, it was noted that the University has health and safety guidelines for those working on campus (e.g., physical distancing; sanitation; mouth and nose coverings; protocols for responding to self-disclosures). These guidelines are posted on the Better Together website, however, there may be a need to increase communications about them. Individuals who have had close contact with a known positive case, will be notified and will be

asked to self-isolate following guidance from public health. More discussions about contact tracing will be taking place with union leaders. If additional facilities are needed to ensure physical distancing in worksites, consideration could be given to opening spaces in other locations on campus where there are bathrooms, changerooms, workspaces etc. that are currently not being used.

## **8. Roundtable Updates**

Lorne Foster noted that “roundtable updates” is a standing agenda item and is a time that is set aside to give members an opportunity to raise new emerging issues and/or provide updates on safety initiatives.

A member indicated that in response to concerns about campus safety in bad weather conditions, work is currently underway to create a map and signage indicating which pedestrian paths will get the first attention when it snows.

A question was asked regarding whether Joint Health and Safety Committees are still functioning. It was confirmed that yes, they are still functional albeit mostly in a virtual manner.

## **9. Dates/Potential Future Meetings**

Lorne Foster asked members to contact him or the Community Safety staff with any suggestions they may have for the next meeting agenda.

A member requested that the Cromwell report be sent to members in advance of the next meeting and that it be added to the agenda. It was suggested that Council members contact Community Safety staff regarding any specific issues they would like to discuss in relation to report and that these issues be outlined on the agenda and sent to members in advance of the meeting.

## **10. Closing Remarks**

Lorne Foster thanked the guest speakers and Council members for their participation and their patience with the Zoom format of the meeting. He encouraged members to contact him or Community Safety staff with any suggestions for improving meetings.