



**President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR)
Religious Inclusion Working Group
Minutes
February 26, 2025
9:00-10:00 am**

TEAMS

Attendees:

Sylvia Brazeau, Abby Hopkins, Donald MacGillivray, Sara Parks, Donna Trembinski, Elizabeth Yeo

Regrets

Islam Ahmed, Jamie Levin, Muffy McIntyre, Barry MacKenzie, Caspian Tohidian, Moran Wortman

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement was offered by E. Yeo.

S. Parks motioned to accept the agenda as presented, motion seconded by A. Hopkins.

Group discussions ensued surrounding heritage, cultural inclusion, and institutional identity within a diverse community. The committee members agree, people's perceptions of heritage and place are shaped by their personal backgrounds, cultural upbringing, and lived experiences. What one person sees as a valuable heritage might not hold the same significance for someone from a different cultural or historical perspective. StFX unique identity is acknowledged where StFX honors its Catholic roots while respecting its obligation to serve a diverse, pluralistic student body.

The group discussed the importance of ensuring all students feel genuinely included, recognizing and supporting their whole person—mind, body, and spirit. StFX, rooted in Catholic traditions, has been striving to better recognize the diversity of religious, faith-based, and spiritual beliefs and practices on campus, including those who do not identify with a specific tradition.

Key Considerations:

- **Choice and Inclusivity:** Ensuring students have a clear choice to engage in or avoid religious activities is essential to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment.
- **Visibility and Support for Diverse Traditions:** Creating opportunities for students of various traditions to connect with their faith-based communities and providing tangible signs of valuing religious, faith, and spiritual identities at StFX.
- **Beyond Faith-Based Support:** Recognizing that chaplaincy services are not solely for faith-based support but also play a role in raising religious literacy, which benefits all students.



- The term “faith” is a particularly Western (and often Christian) framing of religion. Many religious expressions (e.g., Judaism, Hinduism, or those who identify as “spiritual but not religious”) are not belief-based.
- Raising religious literacy helps reduce fear, embarrassment, and “Othering,” fostering compassionate global citizenship.
- This is part of anti-racist religious inclusion work, which also benefits atheists, agnostics, and those without religious affiliations.
- Non-religious students can also benefit from mindfulness practices offered in non-religious frameworks.
- **Wellbeing and Pluralism:** Prominent religious inclusion and pluralism enhances the wellbeing of both religious and non-religious students.

The Catholic Church’s integral historical role in shaping the institution was noted, with its lasting influence on architecture, teachings, and traditions. Our institution and the Antigoinish Movement are known worldwide, and we continue to be an institution committed to social justice, experiential learning, and community service.

The goal is to create an environment where all students feel welcome, included, and as a place for them to be themselves which includes at ceremonial and cultural events.

We will continue discussions on heritage, ceremonial celebrations, and how to further develop our multifaith model on campus.

For Further Discussion:

- Are there places or times when engaging in religious activities feels less optional or harder to avoid?
- Are there gaps in students’ ability to engage in their religious, faith, or spiritual traditions?
- Are there gaps in how other traditions are acknowledged and valued on campus?

The next PACAR Religious Inclusion Working Group meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 am.