



2024

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY COMMITMENTS
TO THE SCARBOROUGH CHARTER



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am delighted to introduce the 2022-2024 Report on Algoma University's commitments to the [Scarborough Charter on anti-Black racism and Black inclusion in Canadian Higher Education](#) and to affirm our continued commitment. This summary provides an overview of Algoma University's actions and plans to uplift Black students and employee excellence and inclusion on our campuses. While we acknowledge that we have much work to do, this report demonstrates our ongoing commitment to fostering a more equitable and inclusive campus environment.

To this end, work completed and in progress includes a comprehensive set of initiatives and programs as follows: Braiding decolonization with Algoma University's Special Mission and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in research, integrating Indigenization, equity, diversity and Inclusion (I-EDI) in both the Research Ethics Committee (RAC) and the committee of the Senate; inclusive attraction, hiring and retention practices for students, faculty, staff, and administrators; advocacy work from the anti-Black racism working group; anti-Black racism training; unconscious bias training; scholarships, and awards for Black students; decolonizing spaces; and supporting Black student clubs among others.

Asima Vezina, President and Vice-Chancellor
Algoma University





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Governance

Algoma University is delivering on commitments through concrete actions by prioritizing the integration of EDI in [institutional strategies](#) as a priority objective and the foundation for creating a safer, welcoming, and more inclusive campus for all. The new institutional [strategic plan 2023-2026](#) Priority 4.3 focuses on implementing the EDI Strategy and Action Plan. As part of braiding decolonization with [Algoma University's Special Mission](#), objective 1.4 in [AU's EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028](#) speaks to developing an institutional plan on Black Excellence that is aligned with our Scarborough Charter commitments. This work is currently in progress. Additionally, the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) and [EDI Annual Report 2022](#) also highlight the centrality of EDI and specific actions in response to the Scarborough Charter. The creation of the I-EDI standing committee of the Senate in 2023 to lead and oversee all academic I-EDI policy and bylaw revision work at the university while liaising with non-academic I-EDI units ensures there is transparency, accountability, alignment with institutional strategies and commitments and this includes the Scarborough Charter.



Data Collection and Accountability

Algoma University's first [EDI climate study](#), released in 2022, provided clear direction for the institution to establish an [EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028](#) with clear benchmarks and accountability measures to ensure that commitments to undoing systemic anti-Black racism are followed through. As the institution begins to action the strategy, the focus will be on monitoring progress and identifying areas of improvement. This includes a system that allows employees and students to self-identify. This information will help to support members who identify as Black as well as other equity-deserving groups to:

- Provide evidence-based tailored and holistic program support from recruitment to graduation for students and from recruitment to thriving and retention for employees.
- Help identify and remove barriers that impact employment opportunities by creating a more equitable and inclusive hiring process for all applicants.



EMBEDDING EDI AND ALGOMA UNIVERSITY'S SPECIAL MISSION IN RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND LEARNING

EDI Anti-Black Racism Working Group

The EDI Anti-Black Racism Working Group was established in 2020 and its portfolio over the last 2 years has been to create awareness of anti-Black racism across all three Algoma University campuses and support and encourage cross-cultural learning and interactions between Black students, staff, administrators, faculty, and their allies on and off campus. The committee achieves this through the creation of programs and practices that educate and enlighten communities about its existence and systemic impacts. The committee organizes educational initiatives which include Black History Month social events, anti-Black racism seminars, speaker series, and collaborations with Black organizations and communities. These events provide opportunities for Black students, faculty, and staff to be in community with one another with a focus on awareness and education.

Embedding EDI in the Research Ethics Committee

Highlights include:

- Mandatory unconscious bias training for all committee members as well as faculty members who sit on hiring committees.
- Integration of EDI-related considerations in research design and practices.
- Equitable and inclusive participation in the research system, including on research teams and cross-cultural learning opportunities.



Black-centered community research projects

This includes:

- [The United Nations People of African Descent Decade and the recommendation for Afrocentric Education in Canada: An exploration of an Afrocentricity paradigm for Social Work Education and Practice.](#)
- Effects of Covid-19 on Black-African Homeless Youth in Toronto: Algoma University Promising Researcher Grant (AUPRG)
- [Effects of Covid-19 on Teaching, and Learning: Stories of Indigenous and Racialized Faculty Members and Students at Algoma University.](#)

Support Services and Resources

Highlights include:

- Initiatives include expanding support services and resources for Black students, faculty, and staff including academic advising, mental health services, career development opportunities, safer and brave spaces (Black student clubs, etc.), anti-Black racism working committee where Black individuals connect, and find culturally anchored supports.



Learners Early Access Program (LEAP)

Algoma LEAP is a partnership between Algoma University and the Peel District School Board (PDSB) and Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB). This program aims to provide a ‘leap’ from high school to university for equity-deserving students who have been historically underrepresented on university campuses. Algoma LEAP provides an opportunity for high school students, especially those who are Indigenous, Black, racialized, and marginalized groups, to spend one Grade 11 or Grade 12 semester at Algoma University taking high school courses and university-level courses in subjects like video game design. While participating in campus life and succeeding in their courses, students gain confidence that they belong at university, and can be successful in pursuing a degree. Program highlights are as follows:

- Algoma University has created the LEAP Scholarship, which will provide \$6,000 for each LEAP graduate who returns to Algoma University for their undergraduate degree.
- Each student completing the program earns three university credits.
- The first cohort was 90% Black students, the majority of whom successfully graduated at the end of January. There were 43 students in the first cohort, 18 in grade 11 and 25 in grade 12.
- Fourteen of 23(60%) Black Grade 12 students have made plans to pursue university education.
- For the Spring 2024 Cohort, 78% of PDSB and 32% of DPCSB students enrolled identify as Black. The second cohort will graduate in June 2024.



EDI Training

Algoma University is committed to creating a more inclusive and safer environment and therefore provides ongoing EDI training opportunities to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and board members. This includes specific anti-Black racism training, anti-racism initiatives, ongoing anti-Black racism committee Black History Month speaker series, and access to the in-house Cultural Safety Learning Program (CSLP). This online course is available to all employees and students. Algoma University is also an employer partner with LinkedIn Learning and the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. These initiatives provide the foundation for a meaningful dialogue, systemic change, and collective action to undo systemic racism.



Community Engagement and Partnerships

Algoma University is actively building partnerships, collaborating on projects, hosting sessions, and supporting various local Black communities in support of racial justice as shown below that enable mutuality, foster inclusive Black excellence, and intersectional Black flourishing as well as addressing systemic racism beyond campus borders where its three campuses are located:

[City of Brampton Black History Month:](#)

- Annual sponsorship includes public recognition at launch events, [signage](#) at all city-sponsored Black History Month events

[Heartbeats in Performing Arts -](#)

[Internship & Co-op Program for Black and Indigenous Youth:](#)

- The program aims to celebrate and elevate Black and Indigenous youth, increase cultural understanding, provide opportunities for professional development, and prepare students for future leadership positions and careers in the live performance industry. Algoma University is the lead sponsor.
- Intentional sponsorship supports to [African Caribbean Canadian Association of Northern Ontario \(ACCANO\)](#); [Network of Nigerians in Canada](#) **Black History Month Summit and Cultural Night**; [Africans in Timmins](#); and [NaijaFest](#) for example, help promote cultural celebrations, scholarships, bursaries, and other community initiatives.

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY
Brampton | Sault Ste. Marie | Timmins
algomau.ca
info@algomau.ca
1-888-Algoma-U



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