

# SCARBOROUGH CHARTER

**ON ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND BLACK INCLUSION IN CANADIAN  
HIGHER EDUCATION: PRINCIPLES, ACTIONS, AND ACCOUNTABILITIES**

**NATIONAL DIALOGUES AND ACTION**  
FOR INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES

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- Ananya Mukherjee Reed, Provost and Vice-President Academic, University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus;
- Marie-Claude Rigaud, Special Advisor and Associate Secretary General, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Indigenous Relations, Université de Montréal (participated until May 2021);
- Barrington Walker, Associate Vice-President, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Wilfrid Laurier University

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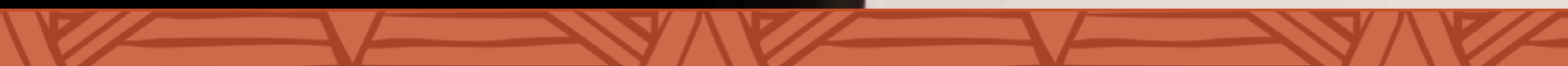


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- Annette Trimbee, President and Vice-Chancellor, MacEwan University
- Barrington Walker, Associate Vice-President, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Wilfrid Laurier University



# | PREAMBLE



**AFFIRMING** the fundamental importance for universities and colleges – as institutions uniquely well placed to inspire deep learning in the search for truth, research excellence and community engagement for the benefit of world society - to take up the call to foster pan-Canadian communities of learning that build practices of ongoing dialogue and action yielding inclusion, substantive equality and societal transformation;

**RECALLING** the distinct, complex historical legacy of Black peoples since the first known arrival of interpreter Mathieu da Costa in 1608, including the enslavement of Black people in Canada, Black participation in the defence of British North America in the War of 1812, the establishment of Black communities from the Loyalist Era through the Underground Railroad, Black settlement on the Prairies at the turn of the twentieth century, contributions of people of African descent to the diversification and strengthening of this country, and the specificity of the relationship of descendants of enslaved Africans to settler colonial policies and to the first caretakers of Turtle Island;

Considering that the urgent reckoning with the persistence of anti-Black racism, the depths of Black underrepresentation, and the systemic loss of creative contribution compels bold, decisive, and transformative action;

Acknowledging the role that institutions of higher education have played in constructing the bodies of knowledge about historically excluded groups and acknowledging the ethical responsibility to give voice to alternative ways of knowing while supporting community capacity building;



**RESPONDING** to the United Nations' International Decade for Peoples of African Descent, from 2015 – 2024, which has been formally recognized by the government of Canada, alongside the Permanent Forum of Peoples of African Descent, which recognize the legacies of the centuries' long, global institution of slavery and centre the themes of recognition, justice and development in the promotion and protection of the human rights of people of African descent;

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, and leading human rights treaties on equality ratified by Canada, including the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 1965 and the International Labour Organization's Discrimination in Employment and Occupation Convention, 1958 (No. 111), as well as the Durban Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance, 2001, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;

Embracing the constitutional and quasi-constitutional frameworks for redressing systemic discrimination and promoting substantive equality that flow through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, federal and provincial human rights codes and charters, and employment equity, pay equity and pay transparency legislation;

Respecting the historic significance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the power of its calls to action to elicit transformative reflection and action in societies generally and universities and colleges specifically;



**APPRECIATING** the importance of the public policy ecosystem in which universities and colleges are situated, the historic relationship of universities and colleges with the communities in which they are embedded, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, and the ethical responsibility of universities to contribute sustainably to cultural, social and economic life;

Welcoming the adoption of Inclusive Excellence Principles by Universities Canada, 2017; Report on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion by Universities Canada, 2019; Principles on Indigenous Education by Universities Canada, 2015; Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion by Colleges and Institutes Canada, 2021, and related work that is ongoing in various institutions;

Saluting initiatives taken by select institutions of higher education to investigate their relationship to histories of enslavement and commit to reparative justice measures for the future;

Acknowledging the galvanizing role that generations of Black students have played in redressing anti-Black racism, decolonizing curricular offerings, and representing Black traditions of excellence;

Applauding the emergence of caucuses of Black faculty, librarians and staff across university and college campuses in Canada and the importance of supporting their distinct role in guiding the development and implementation of policies, plans and action within their universities and across universities on inclusive excellence;

**RECOGNIZING** that redressing anti-Black racism and supporting Black inclusion, in its fulness and with careful attention to intersectionality, are crucial to promoting equality and an inclusive higher education for all;

Transcending any suggestion that to redress anti-Black racism and foster Black inclusion is a zero-sum proposition by underscoring the complementarity of commitments to Indigenous communities and other equity groups;

Underscoring the need to move beyond the notion of equity seeking groups to recognize that equity is deserved, as an incarnation of the principles of human dignity, substantive equality, and restorative justice;

The Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions and Accountability (Scarborough Charter) sets out the following principles, actions and accountability measures that should guide the letter and spirit of the academic mission, across institutional levels within universities and colleges and at the sectoral level across Canada:





# | PRINCIPLES





Signatories of the Scarborough Charter commit to redressing anti-Black racism and fostering Black inclusion in universities and colleges across Canada.

The following four overarching principles should apply to any initiative to redress anti-Black racism and foster Black inclusion in our universities and colleges, and across the sector. The principles should guide the letter and spirit of all university, college, and sector-wide policy making and action:

## BLACK FLOURISHING

Universities and colleges are central to enabling the just, fulsome realization of human potential and thriving. They play a pivotal role in redressing anti-Black racism by removing structural barriers to equity, inclusion and social justice, with full recognition of our intersectional identities, while advancing the innovative research, critical thinking and engaged dissemination of knowledge that foster substantive equality, human dignity, and sustainability.

## INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Inclusive excellence embodies the recognition that not only is post-secondary education enriched by equity, diversity and inclusion; equitable inclusion is critical to excellence. Excellence encompasses the ability of universities and colleges to educate and to innovate; to be alive to complexity and proactive in the face of crisis; to foster fundamental questioning through rigorous, respectful engagements across difference; and to enable societal transformation.

## MUTUALITY

Universities and colleges are embedded in communities locally, as well as nationally, regionally and internationally. By recognizing a responsibility to foster mutuality, universities and colleges acknowledge the multiple social relations and modes of societal action upon which universities and colleges depend and for which they are accountable. The positive, interactive relationship with Black communities entailed by mutuality includes the special role universities and colleges can assume in Black community economic development, notably as anchor institutions and local employers.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability involves a commitment both to ongoing education - including self-education - and to courageous action built on deeply consultative processes. Accountability includes acknowledging, respecting, and acting responsively in the face of Black life, in its full complexity and intersectionality. Universities and colleges must move beyond mere representation and take responsibility for supporting fulsome, transformative inclusion across university and college structures, policies and procedures. By signing the Scarborough Charter, universities and colleges commit to a process of continuous improvement through ongoing, sustained implementing of the Scarborough Charter's principles-based commitments to action, and to be answerable for concrete outcomes, including to their respective Boards, communities and other stakeholders.



**ACTION**  
INSTITUTIONAL

With full regard and respect for the rich tapestry of institutional contexts in which universities and colleges are situated, signatories of the Scarborough Charter will be guided by each of the four principles as they prepare their contextually-appropriate, best-efforts-based, individual institutional action plan. Action plans should convey institutions' spirit of good faith in embracing and enabling meaningful, measurable and continuous improvement in the implementation of the following commitments to action. These principles-based commitments to action apply to *governance* in decision-making processes and structures at all levels of the institution, to *research*, to *teaching and learning*, and to *community engagement*.

## 1. Universities and Colleges commit to promoting intersectional Black flourishing

### 1.1. in *governance* by

#### 1.1.1. ensuring that leadership on equity

- 1.1.1.1. permeates governance structures across all university and college levels;
- 1.1.1.2. is individually championed throughout senior administration as it progressively diversifies its own representation through mentorship, encouragement and sponsorship of Black faculty and staff;
- 1.1.1.3. sustains inclusive, deliberative processes that acknowledge, redress and report on anti-Black racism;
- 1.1.1.4. enlists faculty, staff and student associations as pivotal contributors to achieving equity, as they also bear a responsibility to be inclusive and to work constructively with organizations of Black faculty, staff and students;

1.1.2. reviewing and revising dispute resolution processes, including disciplinary measures and protections against reprisals, to secure their responsiveness to redressing anti-Black racism and promoting inclusive, balanced representation, with special regard to the position of non-unionized Black staff and untenured Black faculty;

### 1.2. in *research* by

- 1.2.1. engaging proactively - including externally with research bodies such as the tri-council of federal funding agencies - to redress Black underrepresentation and build equitable practices into research grant selection and research recognition processes;
- 1.2.2. building concrete research support practices, including mentorship and sponsorship, to encourage Black faculty thriving through the academic ranks and into positions of research leadership, accompanied by recognition practices for members of historically underrepresented communities bearing disproportionate burdens of the labour;



### 1.3. in *teaching and learning* by

- 1.3.1. constructing affirming, accessible spaces and cultivating naming practices that foster Black belonging, knowledge development and sharing;
- 1.3.2. enabling, supporting and acknowledging
  - 1.3.2.1. Black student leadership, insights, energy and actions throughout academic programs, curricular and co-curricular development and other aspects of university and college teaching, learning and student development;
  - 1.3.2.2. Black staff members' co-curricular and other contributions to student well-being and success;

### 1.4. in *community engagement* by

- 1.4.1. commissioning academically rigorous and community inclusive task forces to conduct independent studies of the histories of slavery, colonialism and racial injustice, with a mandate to include recommendations that promote inclusive higher education and community flourishing into the future;
- 1.4.2. supporting dedicated research, teaching and community engagement in keeping with the themes of the United Nations' International Decade for Peoples of African Descent and the Permanent Forum of Peoples of African Descent.

## 2. Universities and colleges commit to fostering **inclusive excellence**

### 2.1. in *governance* by

- 2.1.1. identifying the extent of (under)representation through baseline data compilation and analysis, to provide demographic knowledge of Black faculty, staff and students within their institutions – with suitable disaggregation of data to reflect domestic and international student populations – starting with recruitment at each university and college as an initial focus for action to foster inclusion;
- 2.1.2. establishing comprehensive strategies where gaps exist, including targets, time tables and transparency mechanisms, and providing sustained resource commitments to
  - 2.1.2.1. recruit faculty, wherever feasible in cluster/cohort hires across academic disciplines; to support their promotion through the ranks; and otherwise equitably employ best practices, including on spousal hiring, to attract and to retain Black professors;
  - 2.1.2.2. recruit, support career progression and retain Black managerial, administrative and support staff across university and college units;
  - 2.1.2.3. recruit Black students and support their successful program completion;
  - 2.1.2.4. identify and redress wage discrimination and occupational segregation, with careful attention to preventing discrimination on intersecting grounds;

2.2 in *research* by

2.2.1. recognizing, engaging critically with and celebrating traditions of Black intellectual excellence across the academy, including by supporting research clusters that enable plural communities of knowledge to flourish;

2.2.2. increasing equitable and inclusive participation by

2.2.2.1. Black academics in research teams, research chairs and fellowships, university-wide visiting keynote lectureships and other forms of research recognition that celebrate excellence;

2.2.2.2. Black staff in the support of research development, management, implementation, and recognitions of excellence;

2.3. in *teaching and learning* by

2.3.1. encouraging the emergence of Black and Black Canadian studies programs while promoting curricular development across academic disciplines that decentres epistemic Eurocentrism, that holds open space for expansive, world-inspired learning that broadens disciplinary canons to include Black expertise and knowledges;

2.3.2. providing scholarships, bursaries, fellowships and related, dedicated support including increased research opportunities, mentorship and alumni engagement to support

2.3.2.1. Black admission to universities and colleges;

2.3.2.2. Black enrollment in graduate and post-doctoral studies;

2.3.2.2. Black thriving through to program completion;

2.4. in *community engagement* by

2.4.1. developing pathways for access to higher education for Black students, including promoting student outreach with local, regional, national and international communities and providing robust “wrap-around” support;

2.4.2. building mechanisms for ongoing outreach and sponsors for broader Black communities, including Black staff among career advisors and advancement professionals, as well as alumni mentors from Black communities.



### 3. Universities and colleges commit to enabling **mutuality**

#### 3.1. In *governance* by

3.1.1. reassessing the existing campus security and safety infrastructure and protocols with a view to protecting the human dignity, equality and safety of Black people on campus;

3.1.2. undertaking periodic climate surveys that consider local community relations, to assess and guide initiatives to build inclusive campuses in a manner that is responsive to the specific needs of Black faculty, staff and students;

#### 3.2. In *research* by

3.2.1. confirming that research about Black communities or that is likely to affect the welfare of Black communities respects principles of co-construction, including sustained outreach to relevant communities on inputs and the interpretation of research results;

3.2.2. collaborating on the development of Tri-Agency Canada (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) guidelines on research affecting Black communities, fostering community-engaged research principles and advancing representation of Black community members and respect for their lived experiences;

#### 3.3. in *teaching and learning* by

3.3.1. building grade school through university and college outreach programs;

3.3.2. adopting policies, educational sessions and practices of inclusion that sustain harassment-free classrooms and other learning environments in which rigorous study can occur;

#### 3.4 in *community engagement* by

3.4.1. requiring Black community prior-impact assessments as part of procurement processes, to move equity initiatives away from risk mitigation toward proactive, sustainable opportunity creation and integrating Black community impact assessments into any restructuring initiatives;

3.4.2. building robust community partnerships with Black-led organizations.



## 4. Universities and Colleges commit to ensuring accountability

### 4.1. in *governance* by

- 4.1.1. establishing ethical data co-creation and governance practices, notably by
  - 4.1.1.1. confirming that the collection of data is undertaken as a means to foster inclusive, just, equitable post-secondary environments that are enabled by rigorous, evidence-based decision-making;
  - 4.1.1.2. exercising caution in the face of the systemic inequalities and racial biases that may be perpetuated within artificial intelligence, big data, surveillance and other technological advances, while deepening the understanding of technological inequities;
  - 4.1.1.3. mapping, retrieving, maintaining and to the extent permitted by law sharing reliable, disaggregated data on Black representation over defined periods of time, and partnering with Statistics Canada and other relevant external institutions in this respect;
  - 4.1.1.4. benchmarking data to enable comparisons over time and between signatories to the Scarborough Charter and promoting transparency about the reasons that any identified categories of data may not be collected;
- 4.1.2. establishing a suitably staffed office in senior administration dedicated in whole or in part to redressing racism across the university or college with responsibility for academic affairs, human resources and student life and learning, led by a senior administrator, wherever possible reporting to the university or college president or principal;

### 4.2. in *research* by

- 4.2.1. collecting specific data on the representation of Black researchers on research teams, in research grant awards, in research chairs and fellowships;
- 4.2.2. building robust reporting mechanisms and reward systems that assess and recognize research contributions to intersectional Black flourishing, inclusive excellence and mutuality;

### 4.3. in *teaching and learning* by

- 4.3.1. providing anti-Black racism education for all members of the university or college while developing performance expectations for faculty and staff that build capacity on anti-racism and Black inclusion;
- 4.3.2. building robust reporting mechanisms that assess and recognize teaching and learning contributions to intersectional Black flourishing, inclusive excellence and mutuality;



4.4. in *community engagement* by

4.4.1. enabling and reporting on co-creation in the data collection process by communities most concerned;

4.4.2. retaining contact with professional orders and related regulatory bodies where they exist (including doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, lawyers, social workers, teachers, skilled tradespeople) to be able to assess the admission and career progression of Black university and college graduates.



# ACTION

CROSS-SECTOR INTER-INSTITUTIONAL  
COMMITMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY



5. To promote ongoing sector-wide collaboration, mutual learning, sustained commitment, and sharing of resources among Canadian universities, colleges and related bodies and agencies to redress anti-Black racism and to promote Black inclusion, signatories to the Scarborough Charter agree to

5.1. establish the **Inter-institutional Forum on Inclusive Higher Education (Inter-institutional Forum)**.

5.1.1. Signatories of the Scarborough Charter are members of the Inter-institutional Forum.

5.1.2. The Scarborough Charter will be hosted on the websites of Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada, along with a list of signatories.

5.1.3. Each member of Universities Canada or Colleges and Institutes Canada should determine its internal requirements for signing the Scarborough Charter.

5.1.4. Each member should communicate signature of the Scarborough Charter to the Inter-institutional Steering Committee on Inclusive Higher Education.

5.1.5. On an alternating basis, meetings of the Inter-institutional Forum will be convened every two years in partnership with the following institutions:

5.1.5.1 Universities Canada;

5.1.5.2. Colleges and Institutes Canada.

5.1.6. Other meetings of the Inter-institutional Forum, during the intervening years, may be convened on a rotating basis by selected universities and colleges in the Inter-institutional Forum.

5.1.7. The meetings should provide the basis to

5.1.7.1. share insights and good practices on the principles-based commitments, foregrounding at least one of the four principles and related action per meeting;

5.1.7.2. strengthen the inter-institutional communities of practice; and

5.1.7.3. discuss data-driven reports on progressive implementation of the Scarborough Charter.

5.1.8. Meetings of the Inter-institutional Forum will show due regard for bilingualism, regional and institutional diversity, and the representation of universities and colleges, their national organizations, and other relevant agencies in the Inter-institutional Forum.

5.1.9. The archives of the National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities, the Scarborough Charter and the Inter-institutional Forum will be housed and preserved by the University of Toronto Scarborough.

5.2. support the **Inter-institutional Steering Committee on Inclusive Higher Education**.

5.2.1. The Inter-institutional Steering Committee on Inclusive Higher Education



(Inter-institutional Steering Committee) is the steering committee for the Inter-institutional Forum.

5.2.2. The Inter-institutional Steering Committee will assume responsibility for

5.2.2.1. receiving membership in the Inter-institutional Forum;

5.2.2.2. encouraging the development of communities of practice within the Inter-institutional Forum, where good practices are shared and on-going learning is supported;

5.2.2.3. fostering implementation and accountability by member institutions of the Scarborough Charter, including through

5.2.2.3.1. data collection from member institutions and the encouragement of consistency in data governance and data sharing;

5.2.2.3.2. periodic reporting, both within the Inter-institutional Forum and publicly;

5.2.2.3.3. commissioning studies and otherwise serving as a clearing-house for the sharing of core knowledge on redressing anti-Black racism and promoting Black inclusion by fostering Black flourishing, inclusive excellence, mutuality and accountability; and

5.2.2.4. interfacing with relevant governments, institutions, organizations, communities and other actors on behalf of the Inter-institutional Forum to secure implementation of the Scarborough Charter, and in particular encouraging collaboration with a range of Black community organizations as well as other key stakeholders including

5.2.2.4.1. Tri-Agency Canada; Canada Research Chairs Program; and the Royal Society of Canada;

5.2.2.4.2. The Canadian Association of University Teachers;

5.2.2.4.3. The Parliamentary Black Caucus;

5.2.2.4.4. Statistics Canada;

5.2.2.4.5 The Permanent Forum of People of African Descent.

5.2.3. The Inter-institutional Steering Committee's founding membership comprises the current membership of the Inter-institutional Advisory Committee for the National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities.

5.2.4. Members serve in their personal capacity.

5.2.5. Membership terms range from 2 – 4 years, and will be renewed on a staggered basis.

5.2.6. Within its first year of operation, the Inter-institutional Steering Committee will establish terms of reference to govern its work, including criteria for membership, composition, size, nominations by members of the Inter-institutional Forum, appointments; decision-making on behalf of the Inter-institutional Forum; and membership fees.



5.2.7. The Inter-institutional Steering Committee will periodically review and recommend the schedule of contributions for member institutions.

5.3. implement the **Scarborough Charter** and support the work of the **Inter-institutional Forum**.

5.3.1. Member institutions undertake to make the Scarborough Charter a core resource guiding policy creation and implementation, across university and college governance, in research, teaching and learning, and in community engagement.

5.3.2. Member institutions commit to co-creating and adopting a contextually-appropriate, best-efforts-based, individual institutional action plan to redress anti-Black racism, separately or as part of a larger commitment to redressing racism and promoting equity, iversity and inclusion at their institutions.

5.3.3. Member institutions' action plans should convey a commitment to meaningful, measurable and continuous improvement in the implementation of the Scarborough Charter.

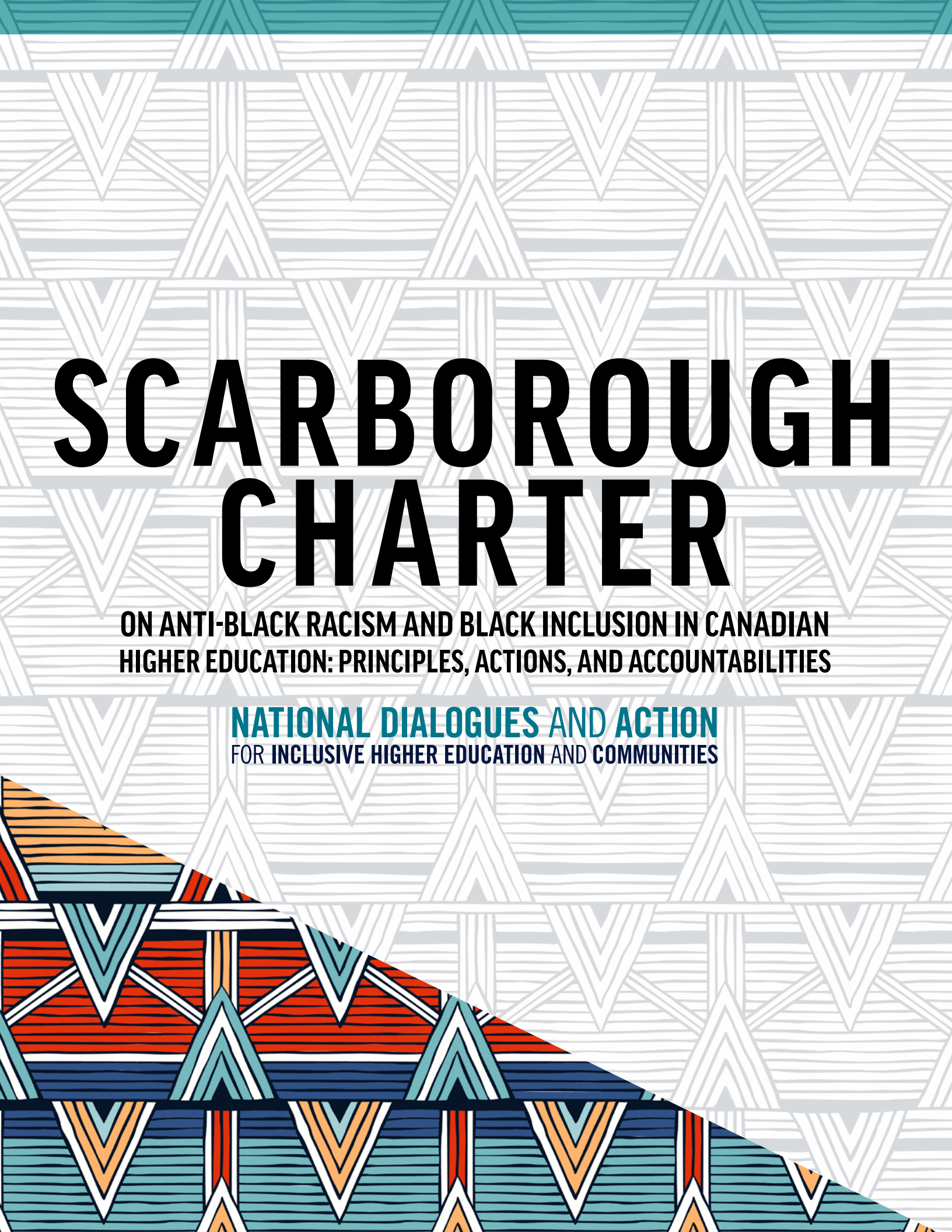
5.3.4. Member institutions commit to adopting accountability mechanisms to sustain stable, long-term and enduring inclusion, while cultivating a culture of accountability that extends beyond reporting exercises to embody the spirit of the guiding principles of the Scarborough Charter.

5.3.5. Member institutions commit to fostering communities of learning to galvanize continuous improvement on inclusion.

5.3.6. Member institutions commit to establishing membership dues to provide the requisite financial and human resources to support the Inter-institutional Forum no later than the first six (6) months after the launch of the Scarborough Charter, to considering periodic adjustments recommended by the Inter-institutional Steering Committee, and to ensuring that the requisite financial and human resources will be available within their own institutions to implement the Scarborough Charter.

5.3.7. Member institutions commit to sharing data, to the extent permitted by law, with each other, within the Inter-institutional Forum and under the guidance of the Inter-institutional Steering Committee on Inclusive Higher Education.





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