

# UTM Black Leadership Advisory Committee

## Terms of Reference 2024

### Purpose

The UTM Black Leadership Advisory Committee (BLAC) will serve as an advisory body to the Vice President and Principal and the campus' leadership teams and committees to support transformative changes that promote that promote Black Flourishing and Inclusive Excellence among UTM's Black staff, students, faculty, instructors, custodians, and librarian communities by dismantling patterns of anti-Black racism and injustice. Using an equity-centered and anti-oppressive lens, the Black Leadership Advisory Committee works collaboratively with campus and divisional partners to co-create a campus where all Black staff, students, faculty, instructors, custodians, and librarians learn, work, teach and thrive by advancing racial equity and creating empowering spaces of belonging in all facets of the University of Toronto Mississauga's mission and vision.

Drawing on the expertise of UTM's Black staff, students, faculty, instructors, custodians, and librarians, the BLAC will support a campus-wide approach to upholding, sustaining, and strengthening UTM's strategic priorities and objectives in alignment with the 58 commitments from the [Report of the University of Toronto Anti-Black Racism Task Force \(utoronto.ca\)](https://utoronto.ca/anti-black-racism-task-force).

### Mandate

UTM Black Leadership Advisory Committee is an advisory committee to the University of Toronto Mississauga on activities that include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing guidance, feedback and advice about system-level matters and those issues impacting the University's goal of creating a positive working climate that supports Black-identified staff, students, faculty and librarians' feelings of belonging and safety at UTM;
2. Advising on and advocate for practices, processes and organizational initiatives throughout the university that identify and address anti-Black racism through evidence-based consultations that center the perspectives of Black-identified stakeholders at UTM;
3. Creating a safe space for reflection, knowledge sharing and capacity building that boosts Black talent, scholarship, and advancement;
4. Increasing institutional accountability to the Black-identifying community for the implementation of the [Anti-Black Racism Taskforce Recommendations \(https://people.utoronto.ca/inclusion/anti-racism-strategic-tables/anti-black-racism-task-force/\)](https://people.utoronto.ca/inclusion/anti-racism-strategic-tables/anti-black-racism-task-force/);
5. Providing feedback on gaps, needs, and impacts and ensure ongoing engagement with key stakeholder communities within UTM. Feedback from the committee will be used to inform the Vice-President and Principal's actions and initiatives around areas of need for, and impact to, the Black community, Black learners and Black professionals working within UTM;
6. Cultivating opportunities for meaningful engagement with UTM's Black community and that of external allies, supporters and networks.

### Composition and Membership

1. Membership in the BLAC is voluntary. The Vice President and Principal, Co-Chairs, and /or the Director, Office at the Office of the Vice-President and Principal will encourage Black-identifying community members to join as and when necessary;
2. Membership will prioritize Black voices and representation, and reflect the intersectionalities of Black/African/Caribbean identities and experiences (i.e. gender, sexual orientation, cultures, etc.) across the diasporas;

3. The BLAC will comprise of UTM's self-identifying Black staff, students, faculty, instructors, custodians, and librarians. Individuals who identify as "Black" acknowledge their ancestral and diasporic roots as people of African descent (from the African diaspora) in addition to being multiracial or multiethnic individuals with African ancestry;<sup>1</sup>
4. Members must be employed within the University of Toronto Mississauga; and
5. The following qualifications will be considered for appointing members to the UTM Black Leadership Advisory Committee:
  - a. Experience working with Black-identifying students, faculty, librarians, instructors, community groups, or networks within UTM.
  - b. Knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion matters patterning to Black communities.
  - c. Lived experience as a Black individual.
  - d. Commitment as a change agent in diversity, equity, and inclusion matters at UTM.

## General Members<sup>2</sup>

The UTM Black Leadership Advisory Committee shall comprise of UTM's self-identifying Black staff, students, faculty, instructors, and librarian communities, and 3 ex -officio members. In appointing members to the committee, the Co-chairs, along with the Vice-President and Principal, will consider the need to ensure a balanced representation of UTM's Black communities. The membership shall be as follows:

- Up to 2 self-identified Black faculty members
- At least 15 self-identified Black staff members
- Director of Office, Office of the Vice-President and Principal
- At least 1 self-identified Black executive member of UTM's branch of Connections and Conversations
- At least 1 self-identified Black staff member of the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy (ISUP)
- At least 1 self-identified Black staff member of the Black Research Network

## Ex-Officio Members

- Vice President & Principal, UTM
- Director, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office, UTM
- Director, Human Resources, UTM
- At least 1 self-identified Black staff alumni member of UTM

## Terms of Service

1. All Executive Committee positions on the Black Leadership Advisory Committee will serve from August to July each term and are also renewable, following appropriate consultation.
2. No Black Leadership Advisory Committee member may serve two consecutive terms in the same role to ensure opportunities for others to develop professional skills and diverse leadership.

<sup>1</sup> Palmer, C. (2000). THE AFRICAN DIASPORA. *The Black Scholar*, 30(3/4), 56–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41068901>

<sup>2</sup> <https://edio.utsc.utoronto.ca/abr-biac/organization>

## Responsibilities of Co-Chairs

The UTM Black Leadership Advisory Committee shall have two Co-Chairs, with at least one Co-chair who is a staff member. The co-chairs shall be appointed by the Black Leadership Advisory Committee following appropriate consultations. They shall be appointed for renewable one-year term.

The responsibilities of the Co-chairs include:

1. Provide leadership for the committee and ensure that its work is aligned with the Terms of Reference;
2. Work with the Operational Manager(s) and the Communications Manager(s) to prepare for committee meetings and ensure the proper functioning of the committee;
3. Facilitate discussion and provide advice and support to committee members;
4. Act as a conduit between the BLAC, the Vice-President and Principal, and UTM's leadership teams and committees to collaborate on developing initiatives that address anti-Black racism and promote Black flourishing; and
5. Be a spokesperson for the work of the Black Leadership Advisory Committee as required.

## Executive Committee Members' Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Finance Manager(s) will manage financial operations, review and prepare budgets, and assist with Black Leadership Table grant opportunities;
2. The Operations Manager(s) will assist in preparing and distributing meeting materials and agendas, coordinating meeting logistics, taking minutes, and assisting with correspondence between BLAC members;
3. The Research and Development Analyst(s) will oversee the collecting and synthesizing of relevant institutional data to support the development of reports, recommendations, and work plans for the BLAC;
4. The Events Lead(s) will develop initiatives that build community among Black Leadership Advisory Committee members and provide opportunities for networking, dialogue and information sharing among the BLAC and the broader campus community through events and initiatives;
5. The Communications Manager(s) will coordinate the dissemination of print and digital media for members and support the management and administrative functions of the BLAC and Black at UTM website and
6. The Advancement Manager(s) will ensure the advancement and support of BLAC members through professional development activities and networking opportunities and collaborate with internal and external institutions and partners to develop best practices and partnerships.

## Expectations of General Members and Executive Committee

All Black Leadership Advisory Committee (BLAC) members are expected to:

1. Actively participate in Black Leadership Advisory Committee meetings;
2. Consider the needs of all Black individuals at UTM while bringing their unique perspectives and experiences;
3. Consider the impacts of racial inequity in the context of activities and decisions;
4. Recognize and make space for the diversity of communication styles and approaches;
5. Be respectful of and remain open to the views and perspectives of others and
6. Attend and engage in meetings to the best of their ability and advise the Co-chairs in the event they will be absent;

7. Respect the confidentiality of information identified as confidential and acquired solely by their BLAC member position. This information shall be held in confidence beyond their tenure on the committee;
8. Ensure that confidential information is not disclosed except as required for performing their duties or as directed by the BLAC and
9. Declare any real or perceived conflict of interest that would impact their work as BLAC members.

## Meetings

1. Frequency: To support the planning and implementation of activities, meetings will be scheduled monthly and at the call of the Co-chairs. A minimum of 5- 6 meetings are expected each year.
2. The Black Leadership Advisory Committee may establish working groups for specific topics, issues, or proposals as required on an ad-hoc basis. Working groups will report back to the entire Black Leadership Advisory Committee and may include non- BLAC members (including students and Ex-Officio members) when additional expertise is needed. Working groups will cease when the issue has been reported on or resolved.
3. The Operations Manager(s) will take minutes at each Black Leadership Advisory Committee meeting.
4. Length: Regular meetings will be scheduled for one hour unless otherwise agreed upon by the BLAC.
5. Location: Meetings will be held in person and virtually to support accessibility and alternative work arrangements for UTM staff. In-person meetings will be held in easily accessible locations at the UTM campus.
6. Decision Making: Group consensus is preferable but optional when advising and making recommendations to the Vice-President and Principal and other UTM management teams and committees. A vote will be taken if a definitive or specific response is required and consensus cannot be reached.

## Accountability and Reporting

1. The Black Leadership Advisory Committee will report to the Vice-President and Principal and may be invited by other UTM governance and planning teams to advance positive outcomes for UTM's Black communities. The BLAC will provide insight, analysis, information, and strategy for programs, services, and policy planning that impact outcomes for UTM's Black communities, as reflected in the Report of the University of Toronto Anti-Black Racism Task Force.
2. Media and Public Communications: From time to time, the BLAC will engage or be engaged by the media regarding activities, events, and initiatives. Before offering any information or comment, BLAC members must forward all requests from media and journalists to the Office of the Vice-President and Principal's Director of Office.
3. Requests made to BLAC members to speak or write in a public forum, at a public event, an open community gathering, on a panel, or any other similar public engagement must receive prior authorization from the Office of the Vice-President and Principal's Director of Office. This only applies if the Black Leadership Advisory Committee member is requested to speak or write in relation to the activities and/or their participation on the Black Leadership Advisory Committee.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/8fad-Terms-of-Reference-for-PAC.pdf>

## Definitions

1. **Anti-Black Racism** refers to policies and practices rooted in Canadian institutions such as education, health care, and justice that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination towards people of African descent.<sup>4</sup>
2. **Accountability** refers to the University of Toronto's acceptance of the 58 Taskforce commitments, underlines the institution's responsibility for actioning its anti-Black racism initiatives within the context of the organization's mandate, scope of influence, and various funding, program, and legislative requirements
3. **Black identifying/ Blackness** is not about color alone; it is a designation for people of African or Caribbean ancestry who are citizens or permanent residents of Canada. Being Black is also premised on the ideology of self-definition, self-determination, and unique aspects of people's heritage and wide range of identities, including African-Canadian, People of African Descent, Caribbean-Canadian and others.<sup>5</sup>
4. **Black Flourishing** refers to Universities and colleges as 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 innovative research, critical thinking, and engaged dissemination of knowledge that fosters substantive equality, human dignity, and sustainability.<sup>6</sup>
5. **Inclusive Excellence** embodies the recognition that not only is post-secondary education enriched by equity, diversity and inclusion, but equitable inclusion is critical to excellence. Excellence encompasses universities and colleges' ability to educate and innovate to be alive to complexity and proactive in the face of crisis, to foster fundamental questioning through rigorous, respectful engagements across differences, and to enable societal transformation.<sup>7</sup>

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4 Oyeniran, C. (2022). Anti-Black Racism in Canada. In The Canadian Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/anti-black-racism-in-canada>

5 Wright Michelle M. "What is Black Identity?". In: Cahiers Charles V, n° 40, juin 2006. L'objet identité. Épistémologie et transversalité. pp. 135-151; doi : <https://doi.org/10.3406/cchav.2006.1464> [https://www.persee.fr/doc/cchav\\_0184-1025\\_2006\\_num\\_40\\_1\\_1464](https://www.persee.fr/doc/cchav_0184-1025_2006_num_40_1_1464)

6 Scarborough Charter | Scarborough Charter. (n.d.). <https://www.uts.utoronto.ca/scarborough-charter/>

7 Ibid