



President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR)
Religious Inclusion Working Group
DRAFT Minutes
April 23, 2025
9:00-10:00 am
In Person, Morrison Hall Boardroom

Attendees:

Barry MacKenzie, Muffy McIntyre, Donna Trembinski, Elizabeth Yeo, *and Jennifer Sylvester (Recording)*

Regrets:

Islam Ahmed, Sylvia Brazeau, Jamie Levin, Abby Hopkins, Donald MacGillivray, Sara Parks, Caspian Tohidian, Moran Wortman

The university remains committed to honoring its Catholic heritage while embracing a religiously inclusive environment.

Efforts are underway to integrate non-denominational and culturally inclusive elements into campus ceremonies. A more cohesive and visible approach will be taken through the development of a shared calendar of events that highlights these initiatives.

Key actions and points discussed include:

Ceremonial Language:

Use of non-denominational and inclusive language in university ceremonies.

Cultural Representation:

Existing African Nova Scotian graduation Kente stoles are being complemented by newly introduced Indigenous Mi'kmaw stole. This tradition creates a more inclusive and meaningful ceremony allowing students to celebrate their heritage alongside their academic accomplishments.

African drumming to be included in ceremonies as a meaningful cultural expression.

Catholic Symbols & Traditions:

Bishop's benediction remains part of convocation as a symbolic link to the university's Catholic roots and founding values.

The former Welcome Mass for students and the Baccalaureate Mass for graduates have evolved over time to become the Xaverian Welcome and Farewell. These serve as non-denominational ceremonial "bookends" to students' university experience, focusing on reflection, purpose and service.

Convocation Committee:

Formed to oversee ceremonial practices, including regalia and stole policy.



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Discussion ongoing regarding inclusion of a student voice in the committee.

Optional Events:

The Convocation Mass remains part of the schedule, but participation is optional.

Other spiritual organizations are being invited to contribute events to the broader convocation weekend calendar.

Community Feedback:

A 2017 campus survey on inclusivity is being reviewed to guide current practices.

Educational Component:

Proposed we seek out the options of a short social reading or exposure to heritage and civil discourse to provide students understand and engage with diverse traditions and perspectives of our community.

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 am

The next meeting is scheduled for TBD