

29 June 2020

## **MSVUFA Letter of Solidarity with Black and Indigenous Activists**

The Mount Saint Vincent University Faculty Association (MSVUFA) stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and all those acting to oppose and dismantle the systemic racism of marginalized groups within our institutions. We denounce police brutality, and we denounce the use of extreme force and murderous actions of which Black and Indigenous peoples have been the target.

The MSVUFA will look within the Association and MSVU as a whole to address our failings to support, advocate for, and make space for Black and Indigenous peoples – faculty (full time and part time), librarians, lab instructors, staff, administrators, and students alike. Donating \$1000 to Black Lives Matter Solidarity Fund NS was a small first step in the FA's response to the anti-Black racism protests that began at the end of May, but the more difficult work is still to come. We will continue our efforts to collaborate with the Employer to create a foundation to Indigenize the Collective Agreement between the MSVUFA and MSVU Board of Governors. In addition, the MSVUFA Equity Action Committee is discussing possible ways forward with respect to systemic racism, and, this summer, the MSVUFA will hold a Special Meeting of the membership to provide a forum for members to discuss our shortcomings and ideas for effecting real change.

Rather than simply stating aspirational goals, we aim to produce concrete actions as a membership, actions that can be taken by us and the campus community in general, and to generate ways we can hold ourselves and others accountable for the racism in our institution. The following are just some of the areas that must be addressed at the Mount, especially for Black and Indigenous communities:

- Ensuring an accessible education for students
- Providing more bursaries to those in need and providing more scholarships
- Diversifying curricula and programs
- Establishing Black Studies and Indigenous Studies
- Diversifying faculty, staff, and students and implementing effective retention strategies
- Diversifying administration and the Board of Governors
- Providing substantial support for those who suffer systemic oppression and racism on campus
- Having appropriate mechanisms in place to deal with racist actions on campus

It is the responsibility of all MSVU community members and collectives to uphold our mission of the advancement of women and social justice in relation to marginalized groups and individuals. The MSVUFA takes seriously this responsibility and commits to actively pursuing these values.

*MSVU is in K'jipuktuk, part of Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq*