

# **BELONGING + EDI TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT**

2020-2021



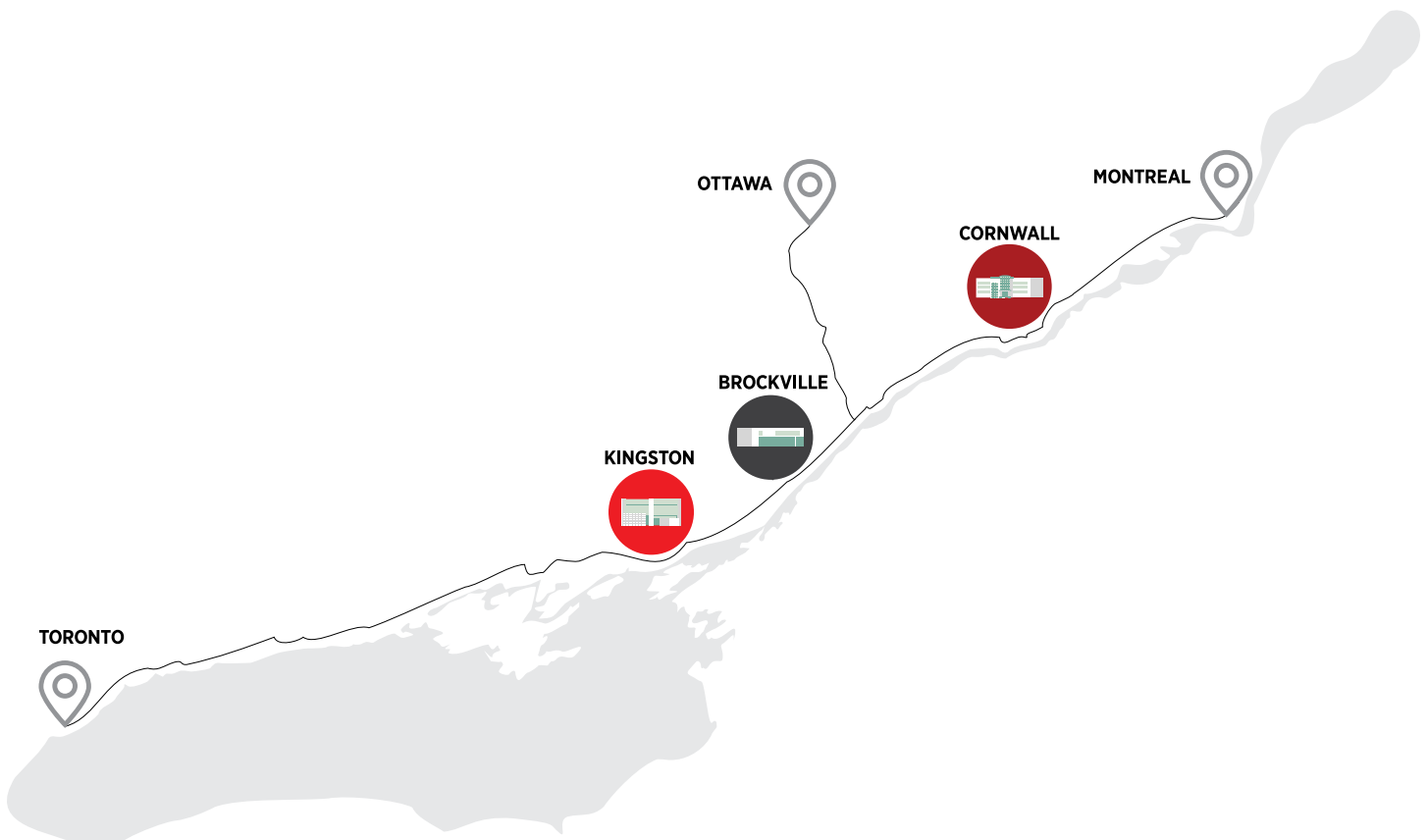
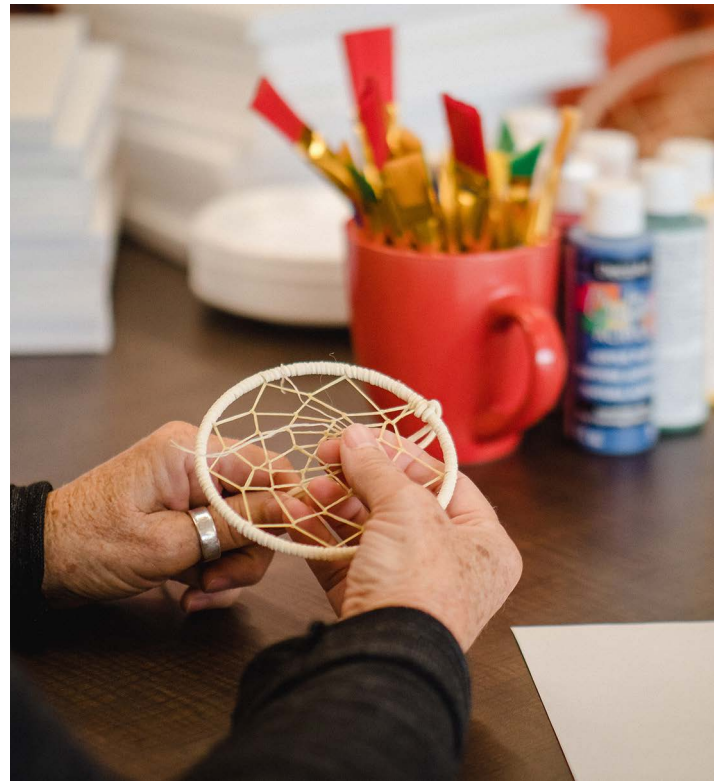
St. Lawrence  
College

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To begin this report, let us acknowledge that St. Lawrence College is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. May we always be grateful to live and learn on these lands. To acknowledge this traditional territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. It is also to acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous Peoples who lived and continue to live upon it, and whose practices and spiritualities were tied to the land and continue to develop in relationship to the territory and its other inhabitants today.

We acknowledge that a diverse community is an inherent strength of St. Lawrence College that we need to support and promote so that we may achieve inclusive excellence. We acknowledge that initiatives to enhance belonging, diversity, equity, inclusion are already underway at the College, but collectively, we can and must do better. We acknowledge the existence and persistence of historic and continued systemic discrimination, oppression, and social inequity, especially but not limited to sexism, racism, ableism, and homophobia.

We acknowledge the uniqueness of the needs, challenges, and expectations of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in the St. Lawrence College community, and we respect and support their desire to prioritize their goals and objectives in advancing Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being.



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## A NOTE TO READERS

### **EKTA SINGH**

#### **Senior Advisor, Belonging and EDI**

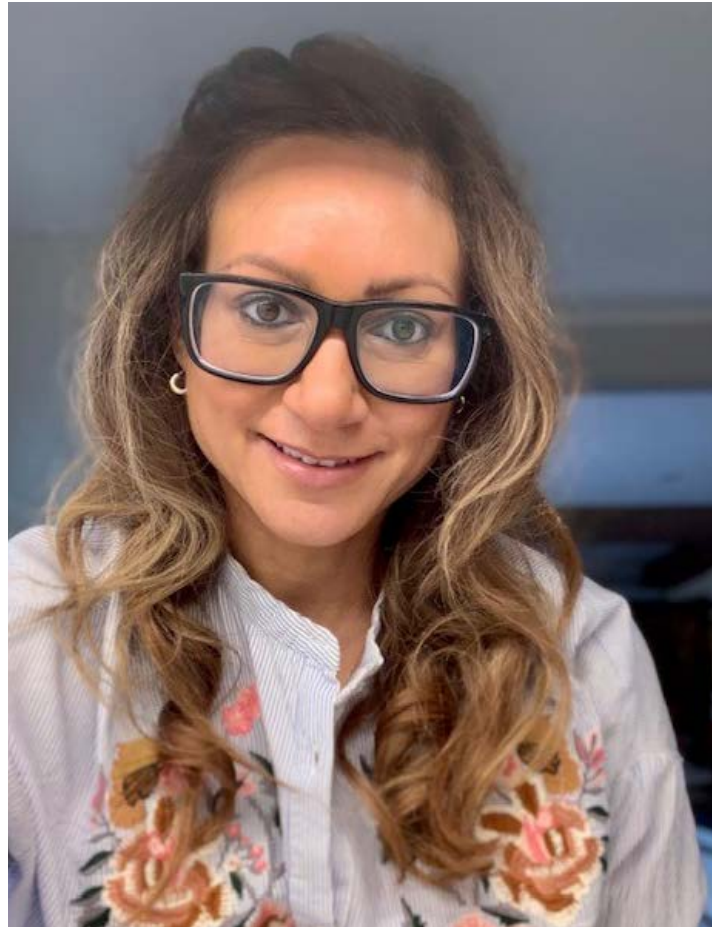
This document is not a report. Of course, it contains a detailed account of the work of St. Lawrence College's Belonging and EDI Task Force, a rich set of data that informs the vision we are proposing and a suite of recommendations that can serve as the foundation for realizing that vision. But it is not a report; it is a story. It is the story of the journey the College community has taken over the past year. And like the story of any journey, it is full of experiences, feelings, and relationships that are at the heart of what is written here.

I was given the privilege and the challenge of drafting this document on behalf of the Belonging and EDI Task Force. As a second generation, cisgendered, South Asian, Sikh immigrant who is also a settler on this land, my experiences and stories of inequity (and privilege) are important in situating myself as a leader and educator—who I am, what I believe, what experiences I have had... They are fundamental to understanding what, how, and why I have engaged in leading the Task Force's work and in telling this story.

As we—the members of the SLC community—continue this journey and deepen the ways in which we embrace EDI and belonging in our workplace, teaching and culture, it is essential that we constantly check ourselves, and the reasons that we embrace (or resist) engagement in equity work. We all have a lens through which we see the world. We all have biases. We all have EDI blind spots. They have a determining impact on how we feel, how we respond, and how we invest. We need to begin by acknowledging how this shapes what we do, and we do not do, and by recognizing how those decisions affect our community and our relationships.

As SLC embarks on the next steps of our EDI journey, I believe we all must engage in ongoing, deep self-reflection to truly foster authentic spaces of belonging. We must lead with empathy and understanding. We must adopt an ethic of care grounded in courage and disrupting the status quo.

I am very grateful to have been a part of this journey and the creation of this story, this legacy document. The journey fills me with hope and excitement. I hope you feel the same as you read this story. #ProudToBeSLC



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ekta Singh'.

Ekta Singh (She/Her)  
Senior Advisor, Belonging and EDI

# SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St. Lawrence College's strategic plan *SLC-in-Five (2019-2024)* committed to making *Belonging* a fundamental value of the College's culture and the student/staff experience. Thus, in the fall of 2020, the Executive Team seconded Professor Ekta Singh to the role of Senior Advisor, EDI and Belonging and it created a task force with a mandate to propose a framework and recommendations that would serve as a foundation and engine for operationalizing this value. Chris Garnett, VP Human Resources and Organizational Development was appointed Executive Sponsor for this initiative. We recognize that engaging in this work, remotely, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic recession have negatively affected many people's mental health and created new barriers for people already facing social inequities. Rather than being deterred by these circumstances, the Belonging and EDI Task Force embraced these new conditions as opportunities to create new connections and find innovative ways to learn and share.

This report provides a detailed account of the work accomplished by the Task Force under the committed and passionate leadership of Ekta Singh and Christopher Garnett, including:

- A description of the Task Force's mandate and the principles that guided its work
- A set of key definitions of terms commonly used in EDI literature and in this report
- An overview of the process and the key milestones on which the report is built
- A summary of the key findings including:
  - » The College-wide census, which provided baseline data regarding the demographic profile and the experiences of participating staff and students;
  - » Key insights from the series of "*Courageous Conversations Focus Groups*" where members of designated groups within the College community spoke openly about their experience of belonging and inclusion;
  - » The EDI self-assessment tool completed by a majority of College leaders, which demonstrated the need for (a) greater diversity among employee groups, (b) more EDI training opportunities for employee groups, (c) longitudinal data to inform the College's progress on its EDI objectives and (d) greater diversity at the leadership and executive levels.

The report includes links to two essential companion documents: *Trend Report for Courageous Conversation Focus Groups of 2021* and *Census Results for SLC Equity Census 2021*. These documents provide rich quantitative and qualitative data to support the report's findings.

The Task Force's work was grounded in a rigorous evidence-based approach and informed by its Research Analysis Working Group. The group included student researchers from the data analytics and human resources program, members of the Task Force and other experts across the College. The Working Group utilized the conceptual frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Discourse Analysis Theory, and Grounded Theory for coding and organizing the data. This combination of methodologies allowed it to analyze the available data in the context of the larger structural, personal, and interpersonal processes present at SLC.

The research was enriched and corroborated by consultations with similar organizations engaged in equity data analysis work including Humber College, The University of Alberta, the Limestone District School Board, the Peel District School Board, and the Ottawa District School Board.

The combined data provided reliable evidence that:

- Many members of the SLC community feel a sense of belonging, they feel included, but also recognize they may have blind spots and want to learn how to improve;
- The College promotes EDI and belonging but needs to do more structural work to implement and entrench EDI;
- There is a lack of representation of racialized/Indigenous people in leadership roles, faculty, staff, and leadership positions;
- There is a need for more EDI training for students, staff, faculty, and administrators;
- Passive racism, racial microaggressions, mental health stigma, and perpetuation of stereotypes exist on campus;
- Many participants stated that they are not motivated to report acts of racism (or other forms of discrimination) because they are not confident that the College will respond effectively;
- Many participants felt that there is limited accountability for those who commit acts of discrimination, bullying, microaggressions;
- There is a strong appetite to build skills, competencies and allyship across the diverse groups who make up the College community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

The report concludes with **seven strategic recommendations** that, in the opinion of the Task Force, are essential pillars for a bold and sustained commitment to EDI at SLC.

### 1. Nurture a Deep Diverse Talent Pool

Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan to support the ongoing success of a diverse SLC workforce at all levels, with emphasis on underrepresented groups.

### 2. Attract and Retain an Enriching and Diverse Student Body

Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan to support the success of a diverse student body with emphasis on creating safe and inclusive spaces for underrepresented student groups.

### 3. Build and Sustain EDI Vision, Leadership, and Communication Capacity

Encourage EDI within the College's Board of Governors, College Executive Team (CET), and College Leadership Team (CLT). The College's leadership, communications, and statements about itself should reflect a high-level, consistent, and reliably strong commitment to EDI and Belonging.

### 4. Foster EDI Excellence and Innovation in Teaching, Learning, and Research

Recognize and embed EDI in teaching, learning, research, and services at SLC. Faculty are encouraged to work thoughtfully and rigorously to incorporate or contribute to EDI and are subsequently recognized for their efforts EDI when is explicitly infused in the College's Academic Plan and other relevant academic policies.

### 5. Sustain an Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive Campus Culture and Climate

Create an equitable and inclusive environment in SLC's physical, virtual, cultural, and community spaces for all members of its community.

### 6. Honour Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being

Honour and elevate Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and connection to the land in intentional and visible ways in our teaching, our research principles, and all other facets of the SLC College life.



## 7. Commit to establishing a five-year EDI Charter and Work Plan

This will align with SLC's present and future strategic plans. This will include proposed budget, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms by December 2021.

In addition to the seven strategic recommendations, the report provides **57 tactical/action-oriented guideposts** that provide tangible opportunities to operationalize the recommendations in various divisions across three campus (Kingston, Brockville, Cornwall) communities. This action plan also includes a suggested benchmark and accountability framework. The plan should be considered a living document, meaning that although its vision, mission, and goals will not change, the activities will be assessed yearly to ensure the plan is realized.

The report concludes by reinforcing the importance of a coordinated approach and collective responsibility to achieving SLC's vision of belonging. It will give concrete and tangible expression of the College's core values—students first, integrity, teamwork, innovation, and belonging. And it will establish SLC's position

as a leader across Canada and internationally in embedding belonging, equity, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of its culture and practice.

Creating a community of belonging begins with recognizing and valuing our unique and collective stories. In such an environment, equity, diversity, and inclusion are understood to be necessary for excellence and innovation to thrive. As we begin this work together, as allies and accomplices, let us remember the compelling words of the activist and writer Bell Hooks:

“Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world.”



## OUR MODEL OF BELONGING

In framing this report and its key findings, and to operationalize the College's value of Belonging, the Task Force identified and created a model that articulates six key areas that will contribute to creating and sustaining safe spaces of belonging at St. Lawrence College.





## MESSAGE FROM GLENN VOLLEBREGT

### President & CEO

In 2018, more than 1,400 people, from SLC students and employees to College partners, met for a series of engagement sessions to share their perspectives, hopes, and ideas on what should be included in our strategic plan for 2019–2024. One of the major themes emerging from the engagement sessions was the importance of maintaining a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all who study, work, or partner with our college. Thus, our new corporate value of **Belonging** was born and incorporated into *SLC in Five*, joining our other values of Students First, Teamwork, Innovation, and Integrity.

**Belonging** at SLC means we believe honesty, inclusivity, and accountability are the pathways to success. As our communities continue to evolve, we look to create a sense of belonging for our students, teams, and partners. We have pledged to celebrate diversity, respect our differences, value contributions, and foster an environment where everyone feels they can participate without discrimination. Although we have seen significant progress, we know that our work will be ongoing.

To begin operationalizing our value of **Belonging**, the Belonging + Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Task Force was established in 2020. In addition, Ekta Singh was hired as our Senior Advisor, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, to lead this Task Force, and have joint accountability to both myself as the College's President and CEO, as well as to our Vice President, Human Resources & Organizational Development, Chris Garnett. The Task Force was asked, among other things, to conduct an environmental scan of current EDI initiatives, identify existing systemic barriers in corporate policies and processes, and to make recommendations that will remove these barriers. Mostly importantly, the Task Force asked our community who they are. Our students, our employees, our alumni—thousands of points of data were gathered regarding the lived experiences and identities that comprise the SLC community.

Based on accumulated data and research, the Task Force has put together seven aspirational and inspirational recommendations which you will read here. These recommendations will be used to *action* or operationalize our value of belonging and help move us forward in our journey to ensuring a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all members of the SLC community. I look forward to continuing these important conversations and working through these recommendations together as a college community. I want to thank the members of the Task Force and everyone at SLC for their contributions and dedication to date. This document and the contributions and shared perspectives that shape it will become a legacy piece that guides our ongoing work to ensure that everyone feels they belong at SLC.



Glenn Vollebregt (He/Him)  
President & CEO

## MESSAGE FROM SENIOR ADVISOR, BELONGING + EDI, AND TASK FORCE

### Task Force Members

Raven Bedford (Student, Kingston)  
 Shirley Chaisson (Staff, Cornwall)  
 Ining Chao (Admin, Kingston)  
 Sara Craig (Faculty/Union, Brockville)  
 Emrys De Souza (Student, Kingston)  
 Newton Duarte (International Student, Kingston)  
 Jessica Jeong (Faculty, Kingston)  
 Terry McGinn (Staff/SA, Kingston)  
 Muhammad Owais Aziz (Faculty, Cornwall)  
 Alejandra Perez (Staff, Kingston)  
 Robert Rittwage (Faculty, Kingston)  
 Ekta Singh (Senior Advisor, Belonging + EDI)  
 Allison Taylor (Faculty, Cornwall)  
 Shanika Turner (Staff, Kingston)  
 Krista Videchak (Staff, Kingston)  
 Richard Webster (Staff, Kingston)  
 Wendy Whitehead (Faculty, Kingston)  
 Executive Sponsor: Christopher Garnett  
 HR Admin Support: Joel Wilkinson (Staff, Kingston)

## SLC's Journey of Creating and Sustaining Cultures of Belonging and Inclusion

We are living in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. The demographics of our region and of our student body are shifting dramatically. In turn, the complexion of the workplace, our communities, and the nature of relationships among us are forcing us to examine our values, our world view, our attitudes, and our behaviours. New and powerful movements like *Black Lives Matter*, *Me Too*, and *No More Stolen Sisters* are challenging our assumptions, our structures, our norms, and our morals. Issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) have moved to the centre of our community life, our work life, our societal priorities, and our understanding of citizenship and democracy.

These shifts pose significant challenges for Canadian society and institutions, which are still dominantly controlled by homogeneous middle-class leaders. They also offer huge opportunities as we achieve a greater understanding and acceptance that diversity is an asset for organizations and individuals. It fosters innovation, creativity, and empathy in ways that are less likely in the homogeneous environments that have been the norm in the past century.

In 2020, diversity is about more than gender, race, and ethnicity. It now includes diverse religious beliefs, education, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientation, cultures, and disabilities. In Canada, it must include and elevate Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being. Organizations recognize that by supporting and promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace, they gain deep benefits. The case for establishing a truly diverse workforce, at all organizational levels, grows more compelling each year. The moral argument is weighty enough, but the financial impact—as proven by multiple studies—makes this a must for success.

Substantial research shows that diversity brings many advantages to an organization: increased profitability and creativity, stronger governance, and better problem-solving abilities. Both employees and students with diverse backgrounds bring to bear their own perspectives, ideas, and experiences, helping to create organizations that are resilient and effective, which out-perform organizations that do not invest in diversity. The 2018 [Deloitte Millennial Survey](#) shows that 74% of these individuals believed their organization was more innovative when it had a culture of inclusion. If we are looking to hire and sustain a millennial workforce, diversity must be a key part of our culture. When employees think their organization is committed to and supportive of diversity, and they feel included, their ability to innovate increases by 83%.

All this means that we need to challenge our assumptions. We need to engage courageous conversations about our attitudes, behaviours, and experiences. We need to continue reimagining our organizational culture, and the policies and practices that underpin that culture.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion cannot be a one-off or a set of initiatives. Promoting them in the workplace is a constant work-in-progress, and they should be maintained and nurtured to guarantee effectiveness. Empathetic leadership is key to this transformation. **For real change to happen, every individual leader needs to live the value of belonging—both intellectually and emotionally—and they need to work to make EDI part of everyone's mindset and structurally unavoidable.**



At St. Lawrence College, we understand this imperative, and we are committed to taking a leadership position in the communities and networks where we are present: the Ontario college system and in the sectors of the economy that we serve. In 2019, we put *Belonging* at the heart of our strategic plan. This commitment came directly from the 1,400 members of the SLC community. It reflects our strong desire to foster a welcoming and inclusive place that prioritizes respect, collaboration, and diversity. We want to become an institution and a community where everyone feels safe and valued for their unique contributions to our shared vision and goals. Each member of the College community – whether student, faculty, or academic support staff – is united by this value of *belonging*.

While there is much that we all share, it is crucial to acknowledge our varied levels of advantage, privilege, and opportunity. These variances can affect our ability to access all that St. Lawrence College offers, and flourish in our campus settings. SLC, along with other Colleges across Canada are presently called upon to recognize and address historical and contemporary structures that result in social inequities in postsecondary contexts.

The Belonging and EDI Recommendation Plan builds on that history, while also reflecting the efforts by many students, staff, faculty, and alumni who individually and collectively have courageously spoken out, shared personal experiences, raised awareness, and

devoted time and effort to advance equity, diversity, anti-racism, and inclusion at SLC. As such, our institutional commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) must acknowledge and seek to address the lasting effects of historic injustices that may challenge equal opportunities to access, and to succeed within, the SLC community. Our commitment to belonging and EDI must also be inspired by the recognition that excellence is fostered by bringing together individuals and groups of diverse experiences, identities, and ideas.

This report calls on the College to commit to implementing the recommendations of the EDI Taskforce. This means setting specific goals and measures for their achievement with a defined timetable that is both assertive and achievable. This work is an essential building block in achieving the College's strategic objective of *Belonging*. It is a continuous journey and every member of the SLC community has a role to play. To weave the value of *Belonging* into the fabric of our culture, each of us must develop plans and initiatives at our respective places in the organization. We must take deliberate action informed by the best available evidence and institutional data. Working together, we can ensure Belonging and EDI becomes a core attribute of our community and enriches the lives of every member.

## MESSAGE FROM CHRISTOPHER GARNETT

### Vice President of Human Resources and Organizational Development

As the executive sponsor of the Belonging & EDI Task Force, I have had the privilege of working closely with a passionate group of students and employees on this journey toward fortifying our value of Belonging and organizational transformation. Much of this journey has been centered around seeking to understand the voices of the SLC community and learning about broadly accepted best practices in EDI. Through various methods we gathered information, perspectives, and beliefs from our students, employees, alumni, and community members, which are outlined in this report.

Through our work with the Belonging & EDI Task Force, I have learned that we have many people at SLC who are truly committed to and passionate about equity, diversity, and inclusion. I feel honored that so many students and staff were brave enough to come forward with their stories and experiences as part of this journey. It is often easier to remain quiet during conversations that might make us feel uncomfortable, however, many had the courage to speak up. The recommendations in this report are the sum of these voices and expertise and they will make a difference. Moving forward, these seven recommendations will provide a strong and sustainable foundation for Belonging & EDI where we will continuously strive to ensure every person at SLC feels that they Belong. I have personally witnessed a wave of energy in this area and the work by the Task Force has been a catalyst for that wave. In my role, it is my commitment to continue to listen, learn, and be a vocal advocate for change.

I want to express my sincerest thanks to the entire Task Force, to the many members of our SLC community who participated in this work, and to our Senior Advisor, Ekta Singh, for the work each of you has done and will continue to do.



*Chris Garnett*

Chris Garnett (He/Him), MBA, CHRL  
Vice President, Human Resources and Organizational Development

## SECTION II: MANDATE & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### SLC AND BELONGING AND EDI

St. Lawrence College is committed to cultivating an institutional culture that values, supports, and promotes belonging, equity, human rights, respect, and accountability among faculty, staff, and students. The College has identified “Belonging” as its fifth core value and mandate as an educational institution.

### MANDATE OF EDI TASKFORCE

Through a consultative and collaborative process, members of the EDI Taskforce utilized an intersectional equity lens (see definition in definition list) to establish and implement a College framework and recommendations for equity, diversity, and inclusion to address the needs of the tri-campus SLC community, internal and external.

The taskforce worked collaboratively to:

- Conduct an environmental scan and document progress in the College in the areas of EDI and the core value of “*Belonging*.”
- Identify systemic barriers to EDI at SLC such as policies and processes, recruitment and admissions, program structure, and non-systemic barriers including lack of awareness and understanding, climate, and attitudes.
- Establish an implementation plan for reducing barriers and advancing the value of Belonging and EDI at SLC as a core value fundamental to all activities, including setting measurable targets and accountability to reflect commitment and monitor progress.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

St. Lawrence College’s ongoing strategic EDI planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts to advance inclusive excellence are guided by the following principles.

#### Cultural Relevance

By responding to: (a) the distinct Indigenous rights, entitlements, and issues, and recognizing the primacy of education, relationship-building, and reconciliation in advancing Indigenous priorities, as well as (b) the unique lived experiences and barriers faced by different equity-seeking groups and recognizing the importance of considering both intersectional and disaggregated issues and needs of these differently marginalized groups.

#### Critical Analysis

By acknowledging the role of power relations and systemic inequities, and working simultaneously to address individual, structural and cultural barriers to change.

#### Community Ownership

By promoting transparent communication, regular consultation, and meaningful opportunities for campus-wide engagement.



#### Collective Responsibility

By developing individual and organizational capacity building, as well as urging senior level accountability and distributed unit-level leadership.

#### Coordinated De-Centralization

By facilitating cross-campus collaborations and partnerships to elevate institutional and unit-level priorities.

#### Continuous Improvement

By undertaking research, assessment, and evaluation to inform evidence-based planning and decision-making.

## SECTION III: DEFINITIONS

### KEY DEFINITIONS

The terms EDI, equity, diversity, and inclusion are commonly used in the postsecondary sector, but their meanings are not always fully understood. This glossary of definitions provides the reader with common terms used in the field of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. To engage all members of the SLC community in EDI, it was important to create a shared understanding of these terms along with a list of other terms that we feel are important in engaging in equity work.

#### Equity

A just, fair, principled approach to uphold equal treatment for all. It recognizes that while all people have the right to be treated equally, not all people experience equal access to resources, opportunities, or benefits. Achieving equality does not necessarily mean treating individuals in the same way and may require the use of specific measures to dismantle barriers.

#### Diversity

The unique and interrelated dimensions of human identity, which include race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, socio-economic status, nationality, citizenship, religion, sexual orientation, ability, age, family status, and marital status. Importantly, diversity also includes the unseen dimensions of identity, such as beliefs, ideologies, value systems, worldviews, traditional knowledge and lifestyles, and personal interests. Valuing diversity involves appreciating the opportunities that stem from intercultural dynamics and plurality of beliefs and values utilizing the rich resources that exist in diverse community environments. (Informed by Abbotsford Community Development Council)

#### Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us.

#### Inclusion

All people have the right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities. Inclusion in postsecondary education means welcoming, supporting, and resourcing all people to succeed, whether students, faculty, staff, or administrators. Inclusion in the organization means all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success. (Informed by Universities Canada; Talent Intelligence)

#### Belonging

The conscious and willful belief, thought, and feeling of unconditional acceptance without the fear of losing security or safety physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually (Matrix360). We create it through inclusion, which consists of intentional acts. Belonging is a feeling and therefore a far more powerful force than any D&I strategy could ever be. It is a fundamental human need, a

word that translates across any language or culture, and a feeling that every human is wired to want. Individuals don't need to be popular or liked by everyone, but they do need to have a sense of belonging somewhere and with someone. (Sands, 2019)

#### Ableism

Discrimination against persons with mental and/or physical disabilities; social structures that favor able-bodied individuals. (The National Multicultural Institute)

#### Ageism

Discrimination against individuals because of their age, often based on stereotypes. (The National Multicultural Institute)

#### Ally

A person who takes action against oppression out of a belief that eliminating oppression will benefit members of targeted groups and advantage groups. Allies acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of other groups than their own, take supportive action on their behalf, commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of these groups, and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression. (Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

#### BIPOC

An acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

#### Classism

Biased attitudes and beliefs that result in, and help to justify, unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their socioeconomic grouping. Classism can also be expressed as public policies and institutional practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equal economic, social, and educational opportunity. (The National Multicultural Institute)

#### Colonialism

Control by individuals or groups over the territory/behavior of other individuals or groups. (Horvath, 1972)

#### Denial

The refusal to acknowledge the societal privileges that are granted or denied based on an individual's identity components. Because of this, the existence of a hierarchical system of privileges based on ethnicity or race is refused. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

#### Emotional Tax

The combination of being on guard to protect against bias and feeling different from peers at work because of gender, race, and/or ethnicity and the associated effects on health, well-being, and ability to thrive at work. It particularly affects BIPOC employees. (Catalyst)

## Eurocentrism

The practice of using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups. (The National Multicultural Institute)

## Feminism

Theory and practice that advocates for educational and occupational equity between men and women; undermines traditional cultural practices that support the subjugation of women by men and the devaluation of women's contributions to society. (The National Multicultural Institute)

## Indigenization

Acts of recovering Indigenous elements, which moves away from tokenizing gestures and toward meaningful structural change. (Coulthard, 2014)

## Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being

In Indigenous cultures, there exists a complex matrix and a holistic awareness of life, intimately tied to land and animals (Grayshield et al., 2010). Adopting Indigenous epistemologies is to honour heart wisdom and spiritual ways of knowing. (Doetzel, 2018)

## Two-Spirit

Originated from the Anishinaabe term *niizh manidoowag*, meaning “two spirits,” two-spirit refers to a person whose body simultaneously houses a masculine spirit and a feminine spirit. It is an umbrella term that can include gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and non-conforming gender and sexual identities of Indigenous Peoples in the context of their cultural identity. It is represented by “2S” in the LGBTQQ2S+ initialization. This term was initially adopted by Albert McLeod in 1990 at the Third Annual Intertribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Two-spirit was not only coined to identify Indigenous Peoples who possess both feminine and masculine spirits but also to deliberately resist non-Indigenous LGBTQQIA terms and colonial constructions of gender identities.

While this term actively seeks to exercise Indigenous Peoples' sovereign right to define their own sexual identities, it is not a term that is unanimously accepted by all Indigenous groups. For instance, when the term two-spirit is directly translated into the Athapaskan language of the Navajo or Apache Indigenous group, it can also mean that an individual is both living and dead, which is not fitting for the characteristic they wish to identify. There are also many Indigenous communities who prefer to be identified under the conventional LGBTQQIA terms, which is why an ally should never automatically assume that a non-binary Indigenous person wishes to identify as two-spirited.

## Turtle Island

Turtle Island is the home of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. It is the original name for the continent of North America established and used by many Indigenous Peoples, from the Iroquois and Anishinaabe peoples to other Northeastern Indigenous nations. For some Indigenous communities, Turtle Island is not limited to a continent but refers to the entire Earth. Introduced in the

Haudenosaunee teachings, the Turtle Island story shares that a Sky Woman fell onto Earth through a hole and was caught by the wings of a goose that protected her. It is widely believed that sea animals dug into the ocean and placed mud on the back of the turtle to provide the Sky Woman with a firm foundation of land, which allowed her to survive and thrive on Earth.

## Traditional Knowledge

The transmission of Traditional Indigenous Knowledge can be both formal and casual, commonly communicated among close-knit societies and relatives. This form of knowledge is often shared within communal gatherings, ceremonial events, Oral Traditions, and other interactions. It can encompass oral stories that recite anthropological and ecological records, ontological philosophies and methods for calculating time, agricultural techniques, perceptions of the natural environment, and production of medicinal treatments.

Many Traditional Knowledge systems are naturally passed down and intergenerationally experienced by Indigenous community members through everyday activities. However, specific types of information are safeguarded and disseminated by particular Indigenous knowledge keepers. When it comes to ecological wisdom, Elders, knowledge keepers, and community leaders generally possess specific Indigenous-guided approaches for addressing climate change, the loss of biodiversity, and other environmental degradation due to re-source extraction, unauthorized development, and industrialization.

## LGBTQQ2S+

Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Two Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, in addition to more gender and sexual identities/expressions.

## Microaggressions

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. (Wing Sue, 2010)

## Psychological Safety

A climate in which people are comfortable being (and expressing) themselves without repercussions. (Edmonson, 1999)

## Racism

Individual and institutional practices and policies based on the belief that a particular race is superior to others. This often results in depriving certain individuals and groups of civil liberties, rights, and other resources, hindering opportunities for social, educational, and political advancement. (The National Multicultural Institute)

## White Privilege

Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are White. White people who experience such privilege may or may not be conscious of it. (McIntosh, 1988)

## White Fragility

Discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice.

## SECTION IV: PROJECT OVERVIEW & KEY FINDINGS

### OVERVIEW

The Senior Advisor Belonging and EDI initiated a four phase work plan for EDI in the 2020/2021 academic year which is outlined below. Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed copy of the work plan.

#### Phase 1: Create the Task Force and Framework (November–December 2020)

In November 2020, after the Senior Advisor, Belonging and EDI was hired an application process was designed to recruit SLC members (students, staff, faculty) to join the Belonging and EDI Task Force. We received over 75 applications from the College community. Once the recruitment process was complete and the task force was formed, the group met and formulated the Terms of Reference, formalized the strategic work plan, and collaborated on designing the journey ahead. Since November 2020, the 17-member task force met on a biweekly basis, and all of meeting minutes are posted to the Belonging and EDI website available for public review at [stlawrencecollege.ca/EDI](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/EDI).

The Belonging and EDI Task Force began their work by first taking steps to better understand the current state of Belonging and EDI at the College by reviewing existing EDI policies and then curating a collective of best EDI practices gathered from other colleges and universities. The work of the Task Force and Senior Advisor was grounded and guided by the frameworks of *evidence-based practice (EBP)* and *data informed decision making*. In the context of EDI strategic planning, EBP integrates knowledge and information from studies, research, and best practices collected from national and international EDI experts and leaders. The use of data and EBP by the Senior Advisor and Task Force, coupled with proactive, supportive leadership, and organizational culture, helped to increase the College's ability to embrace change through EDI initiatives.

#### Phase 2: Understand who we are as a College (January–March 2021)

The second phase of the work plan was focused on consulting with the SLC community about their needs and experiences in relation to Belonging and EDI. This included creating intentional spaces to learn about: 1) the existence and status of past/present EDI initiatives, 2) the diversity of our staff, faculty, and students, 3) the ways in which we foster and serve this diversity, 4) the experiences of staff/faculty/student regarding feeling welcomed and respected in our organization, 5) the role that Belonging and EDI play in SLC programs, services, initiatives, community engagement, recruitment, and hiring and advancement practices, and 6) the gaps in intercultural other EDI competencies that are required to provide strong professional development.

Listening to the needs and experiences of stakeholders—especially those from designated equity groups—was an important way to deepen our understanding of critically important strengths and challenges and the impact of demographics on the experience of our College members. Three working groups from the Task Force were created for each of the data collection activities, and each group met over 10 times between December 2020 and March 2021. Data collection activities in this phase included the launch of the College's first Equity Census, 17 focus group "Courageous

Conversations," one-on-one interviews with the Senior Executive Team, the administration of a pilot EDI self-assessment tool by College leadership team members, and one-on-one interviews with various College leaders.

### Key Findings

#### Equity Census

In February 2021, the Task Force launched the College's first Equity Census to all SLC employees and students. The Census was anonymous and was open from February 3 to March 3, 2021. The purpose of the Census was to find out more about the demographic profile of our campus community, and to invite participants to comment on their experiences/feelings around Belonging and EDI as well as share recommendations on how we can improve in these areas.

A total number of 1,175 College members completed the census:  
736 student responses  
439 employee responses

Completion rate:

94% of administrators  
62% of full-time support staff  
53% of full-time faculty  
26% of part-time/partial load faculty  
12% of students

A companion document to this report, "Trend Report for SLC Equity Census 2021", highlights key details and findings of the Census and is available to view at [stlawrencecollege.ca/EDI](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/EDI).

#### Courageous Conversations

From January 2021 to March 2021, the Task Force organized a series of 17 virtual focus group events designed for student and staff members from all three SLC campuses. The sessions were 1.5 hours in length and were conducted via the Microsoft Teams platform. Members who could not attend were able to share their experiences in an anonymous survey Microsoft Form available on the Belonging and EDI webpage. The sessions were targeted toward members of designated equity groups such as women, racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of LGBTQQ2S+ community, as an opportunity to elevate their stories, perspectives, barriers, and challenges in relation to feelings of Belonging and EDI at the College.

The Senior Advisor, Belonging and EDI, Ekta Singh, facilitated each of the sessions alongside a Task Force or SLC member, and every session included two note takers who transcribed the conversation. Furthermore, every session was welcomed with a greeting and words of support from Glenn Vollebregt, SLC's President & CEO. Many sessions were also attended by members of College's Executive team. A total number of 175 attendees attended the focus group sessions.

A second companion document to this report, "Trend Report for 'Courageous Conversations' Focus Groups 2021," highlights key details and findings of these focus groups and is available to view at [stlawrencecollege.ca/EDI](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/EDI).

### EDI Self-Assessment Tool

In January 2021, members of the College Leadership Team (CLT) and Dean's Council were invited to complete a pilot EDI self-assessment tool adapted from the University California Berkeley. This tool was designed for managers/directors/associate deans/deans to conduct a formal EDI self-audit with their team(s). The tool encouraged teams to self-reflect and identify where and how EDI was addressed in their services and/or programming and identify areas of opportunity that require further growth and attention.

The tool was completed by 78% of CLT and 50% of Deans Council.

Overall, the completion highlighted the need for:

- An increase in diverse representation among employee groups
- An increase in EDI-related training opportunities for employee groups
- An increase in opportunities to collect equity focussed data to then inform delivery of programs and services
- An increase in diverse representation in leadership and executive level roles at SLC

A quote by a member of the SLC community who participated in the use of the EDI self-assessment tool:

"I just wanted to tell you that I am so invigorated and inspired by the recent EDI and Belonging initiatives at SLC. These are important pillars in my personal life, and having these narratives be front and centre even amongst my peers has done wonderful things for my spirits lately. I'm hoping to be a leader in my department as far as sharing content and encouraging participation, and I'd just like to extend an offer if you need more folks on a list of volunteers to support any of your efforts.... I can't say enough about how much goods it has done me to be a part of these discussions lately and how glad I am that we're having these conversations at work."

### Phase 3: Uncover Trends and Themes (March-April 2021)

The third phase included the development of a research methods analysis process for the quantitative and qualitative data gathered in phase two. Qualitative data is crucial to revealing community priorities, the differing themes and issues in the stakeholder responses, and the underlying demographic factors. Phase three dug deep into understanding the emerging trends regarding successes and barriers to EDI, turning conversations with stakeholders and communities into measurable, actionable information for our Task Force.

#### Research Analysis Approach

In March 2021, a research analysis working group was formed which included student researchers from the data analytics and human resources programs, members of the task force, and other experts across the College, including the College's Educational Developer and Research Ethics Officer. The group consulted with organizations engaged in equity data analysis work, including the Limestone District School Board, The Peel District School Board, and the Ottawa District Board. These consultations allowed for the identification of best practices with organizing and coding data.

The research group utilized the conceptual frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Discourse Analysis Theory, and Grounded Theory for coding and organizing the data. These three approaches

are commonly applied in the field of education, especially in research related to equity and inclusion. CRT is used to highlight and challenge the ways invisible/systemic structures may produce inequality both in and out of the classroom and in a broader educational institution. It also asserts that the centrality of inequity is a complex and deeply rooted aspect of society that is not always readily amenable to traditional ways of quantification. We used Grounded Theory to complement CRT, assisting us to consider the larger structural, personal, and interpersonal processes that shape our data. The data was tagged, categorized, and then situated into larger re-occurring themes. These broad patterns were then identified, organized, and presented as readable, measurable pieces of information that could be framed as recommendations in the final report.

In analyzing our data, the following themes emerged:

1. Many members of the SLC community feel a sense of belonging, they feel included, but also recognize they may have blind spots and want to learn how to improve.
2. SLC promotes diversity and inclusion but does not always explicitly act upon it; promotes the idea of EDI and belonging but does not do the structural work to implement EDI.
3. There is a lack of representation of racialized/Indigenous people in leadership roles, faculty, staff, and leadership positions; little to no explicit supports in place for visible minority and Indigenous staff/faculty to pursue leadership on campus.
4. There is limited EDI/power and privilege/cultural competency training for students, staff, and faculty; no mandated training for leadership executive, staff/full time and part-time faculty/students; we need consistent community-level EDI training.
5. Passive racism, racial microaggressions, mental health stigma, and perpetuation of stereotypes are found on campus; training needs to be created that identifies and describes all of the ways in which inequity works from subtle forms to overt forms.
6. Fear of reporting acts of racism (or other forms of discrimination) because it feels as though the College will not respond effectively; fear and mistrust of any type of consistent and clear reporting mechanisms.
7. Limited accountability for those who commit acts of discrimination, bullying, microaggressions.
8. Strong desire to build skills and competencies in allyship within the SLC community.



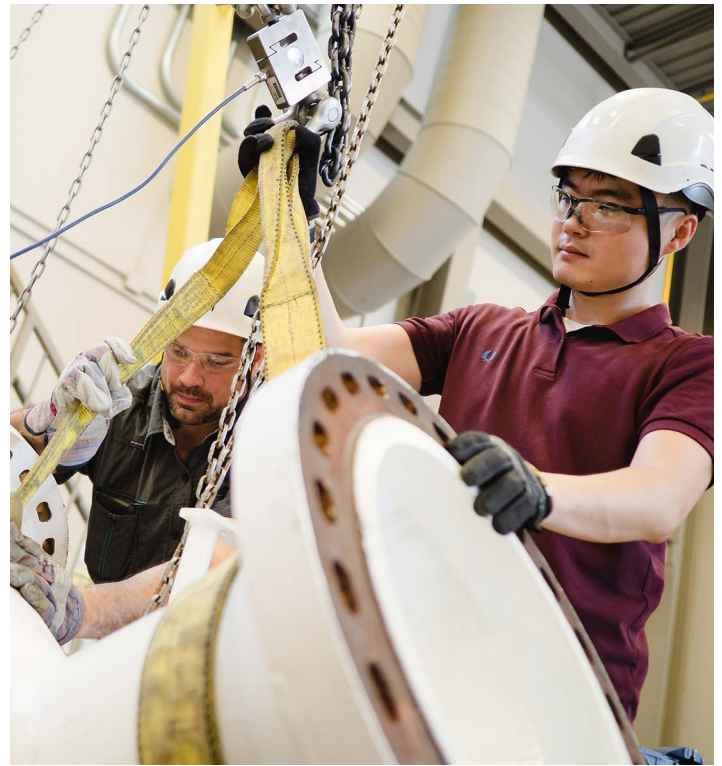
## Phase 4: Develop Our Vision and Final Recommendations (April–May 2021)

Phase four focused on articulating the aspirations of our Task Force in relation to Belonging and EDI goals, recommendations, and benchmarks that were intentional, actionable, and grounded in categorical accountability at the College. The fourth phase also focused on the development of priorities and recommendations in both the short term and long term. Leaders from divisions and departments who already have strategic planning tools and frameworks will be invited to share their tools. The final recommendation report was presented to the College Executive team (CET) in early May 2021 and to the entire College staff community at the Learning Connection Conference (LCC) in June 2021. This strategic recommendation report will become a legacy document for the College and ensure the work of the Task force and Senior Advisor EDI and Belonging is sustained through the efforts of future strategic plan initiatives. This recommendation plan must be embraced as a priority for the CET and the entire College community.

### Project Milestones

In six months, the Belonging and EDI Task force has accomplished several important milestones that have contributed to embedding EDI deeply into the culture of SLC. The success of these initiatives also speaks to commitment the College executive and leadership teams and to the SLC tri-campus student government teams. These initiatives include:

- **November 2020** – The launch of the College’s first Senior Advisor Belonging and EDI (temporary role) and the formation of the Belonging and EDI Task Force 2020
- **January 2021** – The launch of Brockville campus’s Musical Theatre EDI faculty and student EDI committee (Faculty members Deanna Cormier and Ian Simpson as the leads)
- **February 2021** – An increase in the number of EDI-related professional development opportunities (in partnership with HR/OD) available to all employees and students at the College (Black History Month panel, Dr. ABC, gender pronouns, etc.)
- **February 2021** – The launch of an SLC Student LGBTQ2S+ virtual support group
- **February 2021** – Partnerships with tri-campus student government teams in launching Black History Month events for students
- **April 2021** – SLC’s formal employer partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) including access to a variety of fantastic resources including teacher toolkits and webinars <https://ccdi.ca/event-calendar/?category=Webinars>
- **May 2021** – The launch of the College’s first Faith, Culture, and Social Justice calendar that is launched on the College’s website
- **May 2021** – The launch of the College’s *Spotlight on Belonging in the Classroom* Professional Development week (May 10–15)
- **May 2021** – The establishment of a full-time, permanent Senior Advisor, Belonging and EDI role at the College
- **May 2021** – The completion of the Task Force’s work plan and final recommendation report



## SECTION V: THE SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE

Through the comprehensive process described above, the Task Force identified seven recommendations that we believe should be the strategic foundation for SLC's EDI work. These recommendations will support the College's strategic commitment to a culture of belonging and position SLC as a leader in EDI practice in the communities where we are present. They will also play a vital role in defining SLC's future and strengthening our credibility as an international educational institution.

It is important to clarify our understanding of strategy and tactics that underpin these recommendations. **Strategy** focuses on the future and long-term substantive change in the character, culture, and position of an institution. **Tactics** focus on the short-term, operational actions required to advance the strategy. To implement strategy, organizations must commit to learning. The implementation process requires creativity and sensitivity to the evolving cultural, economic and political context. Building consensus across the college is a learning enterprise that needs to be nurtured and sustained over the long term. The recommendations are intended to serve as pillars for the messy processes of informal learning that are part and parcel of the EDI work we envision. All members of the SLC community need to be involved and take ownership—especially those who will be charged with creating, implementing, and monitoring the long-term action plan we are recommending.

We present these recommendations to the College Executive team (CET). We believe they are essential to establishing a strong and permanent foundation for the College to achieve its strategic value of Belonging. In addition to the seven recommendations, the report includes an outline for an Action Plan. This outline offers a rich set of tactical actions that flow from the overarching recommendations. These are the **seven strategic recommendations** on which SLC's EDI strategy should be built:



### Recommendation 1: Nurture a Deep Diverse Talent Pool

Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan to support the ongoing success of a diverse SLC workforce at all levels, with emphasis on underrepresented groups.

### Recommendation 2: Attract and Retain an Enriching and Diverse Student Body

Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan to support the success of a diverse student body with emphasis on creating safe and inclusive spaces for underrepresented student groups.

### Recommendation 3: Build and Sustain EDI Vision, Leadership, and Communication Capacity

Encourage EDI within the College's Board of Governors, College Executive Team (CET), College Leadership Team (CLT). The College's leadership, communications, and statements about itself should reflect a high-level, consistent, and reliably strong commitment to EDI and Belonging.

### Recommendation 4: Foster EDI Excellence and Innovation in Teaching, Learning, and Research

Recognize and embed EDI in teaching, learning, research, and services at SLC. Faculty are encouraged to work thoughtfully and rigorously to incorporate or contribute to EDI, and subsequently recognized for their efforts EDI is explicitly infused in the College's Academic plan and other relevant academic policies.

### Recommendation 5: Sustain an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Campus Culture and Climate

Create an equitable and inclusive environment in SLC's *physical, virtual, cultural, and community spaces* for all members of its community.

### Recommendation 6: Honour Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being

Honour and elevate Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and connection to the land in intentional and visible ways in our teaching, our research principles, and all other facets of the SLC College life.

### Recommendation 7: Commit to establishing a five-year EDI Charter and Work Plan (h2)

This will align with SLC's Present and Future strategic plans by December 2021. This will include funding evaluation and reporting mechanisms.

Over the life of this plan, the Task Force asks CET to commit to ongoing public reporting on the progress of these recommendations with respect to the measures set out herein, and to creating opportunities for feedback from our tri campus community members, through multiple formats, on EDI work at St. Lawrence College.

## SECTION VI: OUTLINE FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN

The Task Force focused its work and its recommendations on high-level, strategic recommendations that are essential to embedding EDI in the College’s culture and practice. At the same time, we also identified promising tactical actions or guideposts that we believe will help the College as it develops a made-at-SLC action plan.

In addition, the Task Force reviewed a range of work plan templates from other organizations. We propose the one included below because it provides a framework and headings that are clear, simple, outcomes-based and call for concrete measures of success that can help us measure progress against our stated goals.

We have collated our recommended actions/guideposts, grouped them under the appropriate strategic recommendation and placed them in the proposed template. We recognize that this is a **starting point**. The Task Force did not have the mandate, time or resources to develop an implementation plan; hence, the high number of “TBDs” throughout.

Our intent is not to be prescriptive, but rather to share these recommended actions or guideposts as a catalyst that can serve to jump-start the next phase of the work. In our view, they will be very useful in parsing the recommendations and building a comprehensive implementation plan in the next phase of the work. That work will include sharpening the recommended actions, defining specific outcomes, confirming the lead for each action and agreeing on the measures/benchmarks the College will use to measure success.



### **RECOMMENDATION 1: NURTURE A DEEP AND DIVERSE TALENT POOL**

**“I’d love to see more diversity in classrooms. My program and faculty is 95% white people, and we’ll be working with a very diverse public after post-secondary. Would like to see that change...”**

#### **1.1: Understanding Our Current Workforce**

<b>Recommended Action</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Suggested Lead</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>
1.1.1: Collect data annually to track representation of designated equity groups across staff groups and publish results	TBD	Human Resources and Organizational Development	TBD

## 1.2: Employment Equity and Recruitment Efforts

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
<p>1.2.1: Implement specific EDI recruitment strategies and targets for all staff groups, especially designated equity groups. Publish results annually.</p>	TBD	Human Resources and Organizational Development	<p>Become a “top employer for diversity”</p> <p>EDI values are consistently reflected in recruitment practices, including the development and implementation of processes for establishing meaningful and sustainable relationships with under-represented communities</p>
<p>1.2.2: Create and implement an Employment Equity Plan that includes clear criteria and practices for all hiring managers and an EDI education package for all hiring committees, with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new job ad form (including contact information of a resource person for accommodation during the interview process)</li> <li>• Information on job postings for reaching designated equity groups (language, where to post, interview accommodations)</li> <li>• A designated employment equity (member of designated equity group) representative on every hiring committee</li> <li>• Apply Best practices on equity member representation on hiring committees</li> <li>• Information on best practices for hiring women, people with disabilities, racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples, and members of the LGBTQQ2S+ community.</li> <li>• Information on best practices for informal interaction during the hiring process</li> <li>• Information about the campus and community to share with candidates, such as but not limited to information on accessibility, mentoring programs, professional development, family-friendly policies and language. This can be tailored by/for different departments)</li> </ul>	TBD	Human Resources and Organizational Development	<p>Attitudes, behaviours, skills, and knowledge relating to EDI are recognized and rewarded in performance reviews and in advancement practices</p> <p>Creating access for persons with disabilities to supports, services, and information, and effectively communicating these</p> <p>Track numbers of participants/users for each new skills development resource</p>
<p>1.2.3: Provide focused EDI training as part of existing programs (ex. Management Essentials, LDP, ICP,) for all employee groups, especially those in leadership roles. Also provide focused training to contractors, sub contractors, and external employees (ex. Security etc.).</p>	TBD	Human Resources and Organizational Development Corporate Services/ Facilities Management	<p>Year over year improvement in assessment of intercultural competence of individuals and teams</p> <p>Increased knowledge and understanding among staff and leaders of human rights duties and obligations</p>

**1.3: Attracting, Supporting, and Retaining Employees from Designated Equity Groups**

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
1.3.1: Fund employee resources groups (ERGs) to provide visibility, support and opportunities for staff, faculty and student employees from underrepresented groups to network and be professionally mentored	TBD	Human Resources and Organizational Development SLC Recruitment Team Strategic Enrollment Plan Global Engagement Strategy Academic Plan	TBD
1.3.2: Embed EDI competency into all SLC employee performance evaluations and department reviews	TBD	Human Resources and Organizational Development	TBD
1.3.3: Cultivate relationships with (BIPOC) groups and networks and collaborate with them to attract more Black candidates, to collaborate in mentoring and reverse mentoring opportunities for students and staff with Black alumni and the larger Kingston, Brockville, and Cornwall community	TBD	Human Resources and Organizational Development	TBD



**RECOMMENDATION 2: ATTRACT AND RETAIN A DIVERSE AND ENRICHING STUDENT BODY**

**“Let’s make supports for transgender students clearer to access on websites (main site) or through email systems offered to all students for name/pronoun preferences. We need a more active than passive approach.”**

**2.1: Attracting and Retaining Diverse Students**

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
2.1.1: Define and implement specific strategies in our SEM Plan to attract more students from designated equity groups (including BIPOC groups)	TBD	SEM	EDI values are consistently reflected in recruitment practices, including the development and implementation of processes for establishing meaningful and sustainable relationships with under-represented communities
2.1.2: Include questions related to equity demographics and belonging in all surveys to develop relevant longitudinal data to inform recruitment, academic and student service strategies	TBD	VP, Student Affairs Communications, Strategy and Advancement	Outreach programs are in place to recruit academically competitive students from underrepresented groups
2.1.3: Develop and implement a proactive financial support and awards strategy that will give marginalized groups easier access to SLC programs	TBD	VP, Student Affairs Communications, Strategy and Advancement	TBD
2.1.4: Establish an Alumni relations working group to support and engage BIPOC, PWD, LGBTQQS++ Alumni at SLC	TBD	VP, Student Affairs Communications, Strategy and Advancement	TBD



## 2.2: Supporting a Diverse Student Body

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
2.2.1: Ensure that students can see themselves reflected in SLC employees, by increasing the number of BIPOC employees, student government representatives and faculty across all three campuses	TBD	VP, Student Affairs and Tri-Campus Student Governments	TBD
2.2.2: Undertake a review programs/services within student life and services with an EDI + Belonging lens and identify opportunities for improvement and innovation	TBD	President and CEO	Creation of access to supports, services, and information for persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+, Indigenous students, racialized students, and female students
2.1.3: Increase awareness in intercultural competency training across the campus.	TBD	VP, Student Affairs	EDI values are consistently reflected in recruitment practices, including the development and implementation of processes for establishing meaningful and sustainable relationships with under-represented communities
2.1.4 Provide anti-oppression and Intercultural competency training to all Student Government leaders (tri-campus)	TBD	Student Associations (Tri-Campus) VP, Student Affairs	TBD
2.1.5: Increase the number of Student Association (SA) clubs, groups focused on EDI, cultural diversity, and belonging	TBD	TBD	TBD
2.1.6: Mandate new SLC Faith, Culture and Social Justice Calendar be used regularly by all SA employees in planning student events	TBD	TBD	TBD

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: ESTABLISH AND BUILD LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND COMMUNICATION PRACTICES THAT WILL DRIVE AND SUSTAIN EDI VISION**

**“There needs to be more conversation at all levels of the College (town halls, professional development events, departmental meetings, etc.) to raise awareness and discuss our organization culture when it comes to EDI.”**

#### **3.1: Commitment to Belonging and EDI**

<b>Recommended Action</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Suggested Lead</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>
3.1.1: Create full-time permanent Senior leader role, EDI and Belonging with the development of an EDI/Human Rights Office	TBD	CET CLT	TBD
3.1.2: Establish an EDI + Belonging Steering Committee to measure, monitor, and advise implementation of recommendations with accountability to the CEO/President	TBD	CET CLT	TBD
3.1.3: Provide Power and Privilege and Employment Equity training for all senior leaders including CET, CLT, CLC, Deans and Associate Deans	TBD	Senior Advisor, EDI CET CLT	TBD
3.1.4: Cultivate the hiring, development and promotion of leaders from underrepresented (BIPOC) groups. Require search firms to provide their EDI strategy for recruiting a diversity of candidates for senior positions.	Increase outreach and recruitment of BIPOC leadership	Senior Advisor, EDI CET CLT	TBD
3.1.5: Develop and implement a communication strategy that makes explicit SLC's commitment to EDI and belonging and serves to cultivate ownership and accountability across the college	TBD	SVP, Strategy, Communications and Advancement	TBD

#### **3.2: Belonging and EDI in Communications and our Community**

<b>Recommended Action</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Suggested Lead</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>
3.2.1: Develop and communicate accountability mechanisms for noncompliance with EDI related policies and procedures	TBD	SVP, Strategy, Communications and Advancement Human Resources/Organizational Development	TBD
3.2.2: Create mechanisms for designated equity group students and staff to self-identify so the college has better information in order to understand and respond to their needs	TBD	SVP, Strategy, Communications and Advancement Human Resources/Organizational Development	TBD
3.2.3: Include advancing EDI to be included in annual performance evaluations of Senior Leaders at SLC	TBD	TBD	TBD



## RECOMMENDATION 4: EMBED EDI EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN TEACHING, LEARNING, AND RESEARCH IN EVERY PROGRAM

**“Increase the number of staff/faculty that reflect the diverse culture of students at the college. Representation matters. The moment we see more POCs, as a POC, it tells diverse students that representation matters here.”**

### 4.1: Teaching, Learning, and Research

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
4.1.1: Ensure the SLC Academic Plan explicitly includes and references EDI in its priorities, goals and benchmarks	TBD	VP, Academic, Academic Plan	TBD
4.1.2: Include EDI and Belonging as a core teaching competency in all courses and programs	TBD	VP, Academic, SCTL Senior Advisor, Belonging and EDI	Number of faculty who have completed the training
4.1.3: Support the creation of new academic programs (e.g. certificates, micro-credentials, GENE-ED, minors) and elective course options related to EDI + Belonging	TBD	SVP, Academic, Academic Plan	TBD
4.1.4: Embed principles of EDI and belonging in assessment and curriculum methods	TBD	SVP, Academic, Academic Plan	Year over year number of programs with evidence of differentiated assessments
4.1.5: Build EDI professional development goals and training into faculty professional development planning forms/meetings for all faculty. Monitored each year.	TBD	SVP, Academic, Academic Plan	TBD
4.1.6: Develop a Traditional Knowledge policy to establish best practices in Indigenous focused research (in collaboration with the Research and Innovation department)	TBD	SVP, Academic, Academic Plan SVP, Student Affairs VP, International and Global Engagement	TBD
4.1.7: Insert an explicit EDI Self-assessment tool in the curricular review and program review/development cycles	TBD	SVP, Academic	TBD



## RECOMMENDATION 5: INVEST IN NURTURING A CAMPUS CULTURE AND CLIMATE THAT IS INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE

**“Establish focused campus activities and mentorship programs will help designated equity students to develop more sense of belonging within the institution. This may also increase confidence in the students and improve their academic experiences.”**

### 5.1: Governance/Policies

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
5.1.1: Create an EDI Steering Committee within the College Leadership Team (CLT) to regularly identify and remediate areas requiring improvement for inclusivity	TBD	VP, Student Affairs VP, Human Resources VP, International Global Engagement Strategy Student Affairs Plan 2021	The College ensures adequate and ongoing EDI-related resources for students and staff
5.1.2: Support the development and implementation of a process for operationalizing EDI review of all appropriate policies as per the Policy Governance Framework	TBD	VP, HR/OD Senior Advisor, EDI President and CEO	TBD
5.1.3: Identities are captured accurately and instances of mis-identification are reduced or eliminated	TBD	VP, HR/OD VP, Student Affairs VP, Strategy, Communications	The College regularly and systematically gathers feedback from designated equity groups to help inform programming and service delivery
5.1.4: Establish a college-wide anti-racism policy and connect to existing Academic and student Code of Conduct College policies. Clearly communicate to College community.	TBD	VP, Student Affairs VP, Human Resources VP, International Global Engagement Strategy Student Affairs Plan 2021	TBD
5.1.5: Create a SLC multi-faith council (as part of the EDI Steering Committee) *in liaison with the new Spiritual Health Facilitator* to lead and organize special events related to cultural/religious holidays (tri-campus)	TBD	VP, Student Affairs VP, Human Resources/OD VP, International Global Engagement Strategy Student Affairs Plan 2021	TBD

## 5.2: Community Engagement

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
<p>5.2.1: Increase awareness and communication of success stories related to EDI in College-wide news sources and social media.</p> <p>College communications team regularly consults with Faith, culture and Social Justice Calendar.</p> <p>Organize programming for months highlighting different groups and cultures throughout the year, including but not limited to: Black History Month, International Women's Day, Asian Heritage Month (May), National Indigenous History Month (June), Women's History Month (October) and Disability Employment Awareness Month (October). International Persons with Disability Day, Trans Day of Visibility, etc.</p>	TBD	SVP, Communications, Strategy and Advancement	TBD
5.2.2: Create a Career Mentorship program for students from underrepresented groups	TBD	SVP, Academic Innovation & Business Engagement	TBD

## 5.3: Facilities/Physical Spaces

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
5.3.1: All College members have access to safe, accessible space that accommodates religious and spiritual diversity	TBD	President and CEO Facilities	TBD
5.2.2: Create a Career Mentorship program for students from underrepresented groups	TBD	SVP, Academic Innovation & Business Engagement	TBD
5.3.2: Create and communicate a College guide to organize accessible events; a summary of the main guidelines could be mandatory to read before booking a venue through the Hospitality booking site	TBD	SVP, Communications, Strategy and Advancement	TBD
5.3.4: Embed Accessibility in convocation access and ceremonies	TBD	SVP, Communications, Strategy and Advancement	TBD

## **RECOMMENDATION 6: WEAVE INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING AND BEING INTO THE COLLEGE'S PROGRAMMING, SERVICES, AND CULTURE**

**“Not enough effort from senior executives has been done for Indigenous Services. The TRC Report’s 94 Calls to Action were finalized in 2015 and the seven guiding principles of the CiCan Protocols were signed early 2018 by our College President. Attention to these areas must be a priority.”**

<b>Recommended Action</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Suggested Lead</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>
6.1: Ensure a strong Indigenous Education Council with appropriate authority and links to the President, CET and the Board of Governors	TBD	Indigenous Lead Human Resources and Organizational Development Global Engagement Plan Academic Plan SLC in Five Student Affairs Plan (Spring 2021)	TBD
6.2: Invite the Council to review and offer advice on additional steps the college can take to implement the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission	TBD	Indigenous Lead Human Resources and Organizational Development Global Engagement Plan Academic Plan SLC in Five Student Affairs Plan (Spring 2021)	TBD
6.3: Create an Indigenous Student Academic/ Curriculum Advisory Group to advise the SCTL and with direct reporting to the SLC Academic Council	TBD	Indigenous Lead Human Resources and Organizational Development Global Engagement Plan Academic Plan SLC in Five Student Affairs Plan (Spring 2021)	TBD
6.4: Ensure Indigenous courses (across all programs) and content offered at the College are taught by Indigenous peoples, experts, knowledge keepers who are culturally proficient	TBD	Indigenous Lead VP, Academic Global Engagement Plan Academic Plan SLC in Five Student Affairs Plan (Spring 2021)	TBD

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
6.5: Develop a plan to increase the number of Indigenous representatives on Program Advisory Committees (PACs)	TBD	Indigenous Lead VP, Academic Global Engagement Plan Academic Plan SLC in Five Student Affairs Plan (Spring 2021)	TBD
6.6: Create new courses and/or an SLC diploma programs in and/or exploring Indigenous languages	TBD	Indigenous Lead Human Resources and Organizational Development VP, Academic Global Engagement Plan Academic Plan SLC in Five Student Affairs Plan (Spring 2021)	TBD
6.7: Support medical and nursing programs at SLC to require all students to take a course addressing Indigenous health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and [Indigenous] rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.	TBD	Indigenous Lead Human Resources and Organizational Development VP, Academic Global Engagement Plan Academic Plan SLC in Five Student Affairs Plan (Spring 2021)	TBD
6.8: Create a career development strategy for Indigenous employees, prioritizing Indigenous leadership for faculty and staff in the Executive, Dean and Associate Dean roles	TBD	Indigenous Lead Human Resources and Organizational Development Global Engagement Plan Academic Plan SLC in Five Student Affairs Plan (Spring 2021)	TBD

**RECOMMENDATION 7: COMMIT TO ESTABLISHING A FIVE-YEAR EDI CHARTER AND WORK PLAN**

**This will align with SLC’s Present and Future strategic plans by December 2021 and will include funding evaluation and reporting mechanisms.**

Recommended Action	Outcomes	Suggested Lead	Measures/Benchmarks
7.1: Approve recommendation 7 and appoint EDI Lead to create a project charter and work plan with newly formed EDI steering committee including members of CLT	TBD	EDI Lead EDI Taskforce Report SLC in Five	Decision made Mandate given to EDI Lead College community informed
7.2: Senior Advisor of EDI and CET appoint an EDI project Steering Committee with senior leadership representation from HR, VP of Academic, VPA team, VSA team, and Finance	TBD	VP to assign senior directors in their divisions (CLT) and/or Deans’ Council to be a part of this group	Project Team with TOR established and communicated to College community
7.3: Project Steering Committee presents proposed Charter to CET for approval	TBD	EDI Lead Chair of Project Steering Committee VP, HR	Charter approved and communicated to College community
7.4: Project Steering Committee develops draft implementation plan, budget, evaluation mechanisms and reporting mechanisms	TBD	EDI Lead Chair of Project Steering Committee VP, HR	Draft work plan and budget completed
7.5: CET and EDI Lead review and approves implementation plan, proposed timelines, and budget	TBD	EDI Lead CET VP, HR	Work plan and budget approved; communicated to College community; work launched
7.6: CET approves schedule for reporting and communication to the College community	TBD	EDI Lead CET VP, HR	Reporting requirements and schedule established
7.7: President and Senior Advisor of EDI presents summary of plan to CET College community and reports to community on ongoing basis	TBD	President and CEO VP, HR	CET update communicated to College community



## SECTION VII: CONCLUSION

**“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.”  
–Angela Davis**

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work is and has always been challenging because it invites us to self-reflect as individuals and as organizations. It requires the exploration and acknowledgment of inequities and overcoming the defensiveness that comes from conversations on power and privilege. This work is demanding at the best of times. To engage in this work amid a world-wide pandemic has served to increase the challenges and shine new light on the inequities built into our social, economic, and institutional structures.

These have been tough times. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and continuing impact on the professional and personal lives of SLC faculty, staff, and students. Shifts to remote and digital learning have presented inequities in access to technology. Restrictions on international travel and the closure of borders have left many in our SLC community particularly isolated, unable to visit cherished relatives and friends. Those with disabilities and chronic health conditions have been feeling especially worried and vulnerable, while those who have historically faced exclusion have been feeling even more marginalized. Indigenous peoples, Black communities, and People of Colour have suffered disproportionately from the effects of COVID-19.

The same is true of people with disabilities, the economically disadvantaged, families in caregiving roles, single parents/caregivers, and other members of other historically marginalized groups. The closure of campus and the shift to working and learning from home also brought increased insecurity into the lives of members of our LGBTQQ2S+ community. The economic consequences of the pandemic have also exacerbated inequality, as many face significant financial insecurity. Indeed, the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) widened our awareness as a task force and further emphasized the importance of our mandate in creating strategic EDI recommendations for the College.

Despite these barriers and challenges, the SLC Belonging and EDI Task Force was purposeful and intentional in our efforts. In an extraordinarily short amount of time, we created a space to ensure the voices and stakeholders of our community were placed at the centre of our work to deeply inform the formation of the final recommendations. Throughout our consultations and data collection efforts, we heard consistent messages that indicated a desire to build an inclusive campus community that breathes our value of ‘belonging’ in all that we do. We heard that many members of our campus community feel a strong sense of belonging and feel safe and connected to their peers. We heard about the need for dignified spaces of prayer and other communal spaces for people to come together. We heard about the strong desire for staff, faculty, and employees from designated equity groups to come together for social and career-mentoring opportunities. We heard about the presence of microaggressions and their collective impact on individuals’ self-esteem. We heard about the need for mandatory EDI training for all senior leaders at the College and a focused College wide, employment equity plan. Most importantly, we heard about the need for a sustained commitment to EDI and belonging, a detailed action plan with the necessary budget and staffing, and regular evaluation and reporting mechanisms as essential tools to

building a genuinely inclusive community—a community where we all share ownership for creating a culture of equity and inclusion. The seven strategic recommendations constitute the pillars for a bold and sustained commitment to EDI at SLC. Indeed, equity is built from below, but responsibility for equity rests at the top. If SLC is to live up to its commitment to Belonging and EDI, its leadership must “assume significant responsibility for creating conditions that enhance equality,” taking into account how institutional policies, procedures, and cultures “intersect with individual and collective agency, informal [practices, and] private power.” (Sheppard, 2010)

They reinforce the importance of a coordinated approach to achieving this vision. If implemented and sustained, we will share ownership and accountability. We will give concrete and tangible expression of our core values—students first, integrity, teamwork, innovation, and belonging. To quote Dr. Andrew Campbell (2021), we leave you, the reader, with some important questions:

“Who will bell the cat? What actions will YOU take in your work to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the inequities within YOUR space? This is about YOUR individual action. How will you act? What will you do? How will you be a part of this change?”

This is just the beginning. Let us embark on this journey together.







## SECTION X: RESOURCES

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# St. Lawrence College

Kingston, Brockville, Cornwall

Belonging + EDI Task Force Recommendations Report

2020–2021

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