

Attachment A

From: Johnston, Sadhu
Sent: Wednesday, December 12, 2018 4:20 PM
To: All Staff (COV) - DL
Subject: Anti-Black Racism in Vancouver

Greetings Colleagues,

Vancouver is situated on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples and prides itself as being one of the most diverse cities in the world. While we have much to celebrate, we also must acknowledge that racism still exists in our city.

We know that racialized discrimination and threats of violence create trauma that results in psychological, physical, spiritual, social and economic harm, and reduces life chances. We have recognized this in our work on Reconciliation with Indigenous communities and in our historic apology to the Chinese community, and in our longstanding awareness of and active responses to antisemitism. This same commitment to dignity and equity can be seen in our work to address discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community.

From past to present – and most recently in the last few weeks – incidents of anti-Black racism in Vancouver have been reported by members of the Black community. These incidents involve hate speech and threats of racialized violence against black youth. We must acknowledge that anti-Black racism exists in Vancouver and consider what action we can implement within our work as the City to address this issue.

As the impacts of racism faced by Black communities become more visible to the wider residents of Vancouver and to City staff, and we begin to better understand unconscious bias and how it manifests in society, we have an opportunity to address anti-Black racism and the disproportionate traumatic impact these incidents have on Black youth and members of the Black community.

Through the work of many people involved in Hogan's Alley and a number of other community-driven initiatives, we continue to deepen our understanding of the experiences and values of Vancouver's Black community. As we end the year and look forward to celebrating Black History Month in February, it is a good time to reflect on how these activities contribute to recognizing the history and importance of the Black community in Vancouver, how anti-Black racism and racial bias continues to impact this community, and what further action the City might take to address this inequity.

In the next year, facilitated by ACCS, City departments will be working together to develop an Equity Framework that will seek to deepen the City's commitment to equity for those impacted by intersecting barriers to full participation in society and to reaching their full potential. Within the context of this work, we will initiate efforts to address anti-Black racism as a societal issue, reaching out to other public

sector partners, community organizations, and people with lived experience to better understand the Vancouver context and to find Vancouver responses. We see this as complementing both our work on Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and on the Chinatown revitalization efforts arising from last year's historic apology to Vancouver residents of Chinese descent.

To our staff who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of colour and to our wider community, I affirm that as a City we condemn all acts of hate speech and racialized violence. We condemn racism and will continue working to eliminate it in all its forms in our city.

Further information: Questions, comments, or interest about the equity work can be directed to Sandra Singh, General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services at sandra.singh@vancouver.ca.

Best,

Sadhu