



Response to the Report of the Taskforce on Anti-Racism at Ryerson University

February 8, 2010

Almost two years ago, the Ryerson community joined together and assembled a Taskforce on Anti-Racism. It was a campus-wide effort forged by a common cause. The students, faculty and staff have completed their work and I want to say how truly grateful I am to each of the members of the Taskforce for the time, energy and commitment they devoted to the report. Thanks to co-chairs Grace-Edward Galabuzi and Eileen Antone for leading an excellent process, and to everyone who provided input. The report is available at www.ryerson.ca/antiracismtaskforce.

The Taskforce has worked hard to engage the community and provide recommendations for improvement. The university shares with the Taskforce the vision that Ryerson must embrace the opportunity to be a model in equity, diversity and inclusion.

While we as a community have a track record of leadership on diversity, we know that there is more we can do. We must be vigilant on the issue of racism, including systemic racism, and the report provides all of us substance for reflection and action. I encourage the entire community to read the report and consider what it means.

We will look very closely at the report and provide a thorough follow-up in the coming weeks. In the meantime we will undertake some initial steps in direct response to recommendations of the Taskforce.

Leadership: A key recommendation of the report is that a senior-level mandate is required to implement the vision of an inclusive university. The university will create a senior position with strategic responsibility for bringing policies, procedures and practices in line with our goal to be an institution that sets the standard for equity, diversity and inclusion. Until the position is filled, Rona Abramovitch, advisor on outreach and access, has agreed to lead this effort.

Data collection: The Ryerson Diversity Institute is a valuable resource with proven expertise in research on diversity in the workplace. We have asked the Institute to examine, in consultation with Human Resources and Rona Abramovitch, the important issue of data collection as it pertains to diversity at Ryerson, with the goal of acquiring the best available data to inform our decision making.

Equity resources: The issue of resources for equity-related areas will be reviewed as a matter of priority to address the concerns noted in the report.

Training: The recommendations call for additional training on racism, particularly for senior administrators. We agree and the executive group – including myself, the provost and the vice-presidents – will participate as the first group for this new training initiative.

These are initial next steps. There is more to be done and I know I speak for all members of the Ryerson community when I say it is important that we continue to work together to support and celebrate our diversity, and to challenge racism whenever and wherever it occurs.

Sheldon Levy
President